

MEXICAN WAR

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Antebellum Wars

Mexican War

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

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LATE FROM TEXAS.

The United States brig *Somers* arrived at Galveston, from Vera Cruz, on the 5th July. Her commander reports that Texas is about to be invaded by Mexico, formidable preparations being making for that purpose.

FROM THE GALVESTON NEWS, JULY 6.

A letter from the United States Chargé d'Affaires in Mexico, of considerable importance, will be found in another column. It contains information of quite a momentous character to our citizens, as, whether true or not, it seems to show the feelings entertained towards us by our enemy.

We learn that Gen. MURPHY has promptly communicated this information to his Government by the United States brig *Somers*, which sailed from off our bar to Pensacola on the 2d instant; and also that he has strongly represented to his Government the absolute necessity of checking this hostile movement of Mexico, evidently made with a view of putting an end to all hope of annexation, and to take vengeance on Texas for favoring any negotiation on that subject with the United States.

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,

Mexico, June 17, 1844.

SIR: I wrote you a few days since that it was Gen. Santa Anna's intention to invade Texas immediately with a large force. As yet nothing has been done by Congress in the way of raising money, but troops have been secretly despatched to reinforce the army of the North, and Gen. Canales has been named to the command. Immediate preparations for resistance and defence should be made.

I think that Santa Anna calculates on foreign aid. A few days since an order appeared in the *Diario del Gobierno*, addressed to Gen. Woll, and directions that any individual who should be found beyond a league distance from the left bank of the Rio Bravo should be punished as a traitor after a summary military trial.

I applied to the British Minister to unite with me in a remonstrance with this order. He replied that he presumed the Texians were to be treated by Mexico as rebels, and declined interfering, otherwise than to request verbally that the order shall not be put in force against British subjects.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, &c.

BENJ. E. GREEN.

To WM. S. MURPHY, Esq.

Chargé d'Affaires of the United States.

POWER OF THREE WORDS.

"WHEREAS WAR EXISTS."—This phrase constitutes the talisman which has wrought a wonderful change in the whole character of our Government. Under their influence the Chief Magistrate of the most popular Government on earth suddenly becomes possessed of the unlimited power of oriental despotism. Under this commission he conquers a kingdom, frames laws for its government, establishes a system of revenue with a Treasury of his own, and all this as Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the United States. The government organ defends this last assumption of power as a well-established right growing out of a state of war—the right to levy contributions upon the enemy.

But it seems carrying this principle pretty far, when a ship arrives at Vera Cruz with a cargo, the *property of AMERICAN CITIZENS*, to levy a duty of forty or fifty per cent. on it, at the point of the bayonet, on the ground of its being a *contribution* from an *enemy*. We think our merchants will be very likely to protest against such treatment, and to try the question whether we have any constitutional rights left or not. Unless our own citizens are to be considered as enemies, it is difficult to perceive how this Mexican system of revenue can be maintained as a military contribution. Its true character lies in the *assumption of sovereign power* by JAMES K. POLK. "*I am the State.*" We recommend this as a becoming motto for his organ, the Washington "*Union.*"—*Boston Daily Advertiser.*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States.

Congress, by the act of the 13th of May last, declared that, "by the act of the Republic of Mexico, a state of war exists between that government and the United States;" and "for the purpose of enabling the government of the United States, to prosecute said war to a speedy and successful termination," authority was vested in the President to employ the "naval and military forces of the United States."

It has been my unalterable purpose, since the commencement of hostilities by Mexico, and the declaration of the existence of war by Congress, to prosecute the war in which the country was unavoidably involved with the utmost energy, with a view to its "speedy and successful termination" by an honorable peace.

Accordingly, all the operations of our naval and military forces have been directed with this view.— While the sword has been held in one hand, and our military movements pressed forward into the enemy's country, and its coasts invested by our navy, the tender of an honorable peace has been constantly presented to Mexico in the other.

Hitherto, the overtures of peace which have been made by this government have not been accepted by Mexico. With a view to avoid a protracted war, which hesitancy and delay on our part would be so well calculated to produce, I informed you in my annual message of the 8th December last, that the war would continue to be prosecuted with vigor, as the best means of securing peace," and recommended to your early and favorable consideration the measures proposed by the Secretary of War, in his report accompanying that message.

In my message of the 4th January last, these and other measures, deemed to be essential to the "speedy and successful termination" of the war, and the attainment of a just and honorable peace, were recommended to your early and favorable consideration.

The worst state of things which could exist in a war with such a power as Mexico, would be a course of indecision and inactivity on our part. Being charged by the constitution and the laws with the conduct of the war, I have availed myself of all the means at my command to prosecute it with energy and vigor.

The act "to raise for a limited time an additional military force, and for other purposes," and which authorizes the raising of ten additional regiments to the regular army, to serve during the war, and to be disbanded at its termination, which was presented to me on the 11th inst., and approved on that day, will constitute an important part of our military force. These regiments will be raised and moved to the seat of war with the least practicable delay.

It will be perceived that this act makes no provision for the organization into brigades and divisions of the increased force which it authorizes, nor for the appointment of general officers to command it. It will be proper that authority be given by law to make such organization, and to appoint, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, such number of major generals and brigadier generals as the efficiency of the service may demand. The number of officers of these grades now in service are not more than are required for their respective commands; but further legislative action during your present session will, in my judgment, be required; and to which it is my duty respectfully to invite your attention.

Should the war, contrary to my earnest desire, be protracted to the close of the term of service of the volunteers now in Mexico, who engaged for twelve months, an additional volunteer force will probably become necessary to supply their place. Many of the volunteers now serving in Mexico, it is not doubted, would cheerfully engage, at the conclusion of their present term, to serve during the war. They would constitute a more efficient force than could be speedily obtained by accepting the services of any new corps who might offer their services. They would have the advantage of the experience and discipline of a year's service, and will have become accustomed to the climate, and be in less danger than new levies of suffering from the diseases of the country. I recommend, therefore, that authority be given to accept the services of such of the volunteers now in Mexico as the state of the public service may require, and who may, at the termination of their present term, voluntarily engage to serve during the war with Mexico, and that provision be made for commissioning the officers.— Should this measure receive the favorable consideration of Congress, it is recommended that a bounty be granted to them upon their voluntarily extending their term of service. This would not only be due to these gallant men, but it would be economy to the government; because, if discharged at the end of twelve months, the government would be bound to incur a heavy expense in bringing them back to their homes, and in sending to the seat of war new corps of fresh troops to supply their place.

By the act of the thirteenth of May last, the President was authorized to accept the services of volunteers, "in companies, battalions, squadrons, and regiments," but no provision was made for filling up vacancies which might occur by death, or discharges from the service, on account of sickness or other casualties. In consequence of this omission, many of the corps now in service have been much reduced in numbers. Nor was any provision made for filling va-

cancies of regimental or company officers who might die or resign. Information has been received at the War Department of the resignation of more than one hundred of these officers.

They were appointed by the State authorities, and no information had been received, except in a few instances, that their places have been filled; and the efficiency of the service has been impaired from this cause.

To remedy these defects, I recommend that authority be given to accept the services of individual volunteers, to fill up the places of such as may die, or become unfit for the service and be discharged; and that provision be also made for filling the places of regimental and company officers who may die or resign. By such provisions, the volunteer corps may be constantly kept full, or may approximate the maximum number authorized and called into service in the first instance.

While it is deemed to be our true policy to prosecute the war in the manner indicated, and thus make the enemy feel its pressure and its evils, I shall be at all times ready, with the authority conferred on me by the constitution, and with all the means which may be placed at my command by Congress, to conclude a just and honorable peace.

Of equal importance with an energetic and vigorous prosecution of the war are the means required to defray its expenses, and to uphold and maintain the public credit.

In my annual message of the 8th December last, I submitted for the consideration of Congress the propriety of imposing, as a war measure, revenue duties on some of the articles now embraced in the free list. The principal articles now exempt from duty, from which any considerable revenue could be derived, are tea and coffee. A moderate revenue duty on these articles, it is estimated, would produce annually an amount exceeding two and a half million of dollars. Though in a period of peace, when ample means could be derived from duties on other articles for the support of the government, it may have been deemed proper not to resort to a duty on these articles; yet, when the country is engaged in a foreign war, and all our resources are demanded to meet the unavoidable increased expenditure in maintaining our armies in the field, no sound reason is perceived why we should not avail ourselves of the revenues which may be derived from this source. The objections which have heretofore existed to the imposition of these duties were applicable to a state of peace, when they were not needed. We are now, however, engaged in a foreign war. We need money to prosecute it, and to maintain the public honor and credit. It cannot be doubted that the patriotic people of the United States would cheerfully, and without complaint, submit to the payment of this additional duty, or any other that may be necessary to maintain the honor of the country, provide for the unavoidable expenses of the government, and to uphold the public credit. It is recommended that any duties which may be imposed on these articles be limited in their duration to the period of the war.

An additional annual revenue, it is estimated, of between half a million and a million of dollars, would be derived from the graduation and reduction of the price of such of the public lands as have been long offered in the market at the minimum price established by the existing laws, and have remained unsold. And, in addition to other reasons commending the measure to favorable consideration, it is recommended as a financial measure. The duty suggested on tea and coffee, and the graduation and reduction of the price of the public lands, would secure an additional annual revenue to the treasury of not less than three millions of dollars, and would thereby prevent the necessity of incurring a public debt annually to that amount, the interest on which must be paid semi-annually, and ultimately the debt itself, by a tax on the people.

It is a sound policy, and one which has long been approved by the government and people of the United States, never to resort to loans unless in cases of great public emergency, and then only for the smallest amount which the public necessities will permit.

The increased revenues which the measures now recommended would produce, would, moreover, enable the government to negotiate a loan, for any additional sum which may be found to be needed, with more facility, and at cheaper rates than can be done without them.

Under the injunction of the constitution which makes it my duty, "from time to time to give to Congress information of the state of the Union, and to recommend to their consideration such measures" as shall be judged "necessary and expedient," I respectfully and earnestly invite the action of Congress on the measures herein presented for their consideration. The public good, as well as a sense of my responsibility to our common constituents, in my judgment, imperiously demand that I should present them for your enlightened consideration, and invoke favorable action upon them before the close of your present session.

JAMES K. POLK.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 13, 1847.

SENATOR CORWIN AND THE MEXICAN WAR.

We copy from the Lafayette (Ind.) Journal and Free Press the following letter received by a gentleman of that place from Senator CORWIN :

LEBANON, (OHIO,) APRIL 4, 1847.

DEAR SIR : I had the pleasure of receiving your letter of the 28th March yesterday ; and I cannot deny myself the gratification of expressing to you the satisfaction with which I receive that, among many other such evidences of approval of my course on the Mexican war. I felt as strongly as any one could the responsibility I assumed. I differed from all the *leading Whigs* of the Senate, and saw plainly that they all were, to some extent, bound to turn, if they could, the current of public opinion against me. They all agreed with me that the war was unjust on our part ; that, if properly begun, (which none of them admitted,) we had already sufficiently chastised Mexico, and that the further prosecution of it was wanton waste of both blood and treasure ; yet they would not undertake to stop it. They said the President alone was responsible. I thought we who aided him, or furnished him means, must be in the judgment of reason and conscience equally responsible, equally guilty, with him. I see the "Democratic" presses prate about refusing to feed and clothe the brave *men now* in the field. Do not these praters know that it was *not for that purpose* we were asked for supplies ? Did the President want twenty-eight millions of money and ten regiments more of men to *bring Gen. Taylor back to Camargo* ? No, he told us he wanted them for the purpose of *further* prosecuting the war. He wanted to storm the halls of the Montezumas ! And for what ? That question he will not answer. It is for conquest alone. The great model Republic of the world makes war upon one modelled after her, to take away her territory and utterly destroy her, till her leading men are driven to beg the aid of Kings, to prevent us, the *Great Republic*, from robbing and murdering those who, as well as they know how to do it, are trying to establish free governments after our example. I am amazed that a people calling itself Democratic—hating kings and loving free government—should act thus. What does it portend ? I confess it fills me with melancholy forebodings. I can honor the brave soldier who does his duty in battle ; but I despise the mistaken, wicked policy that sends him to fight in such a war. Had the President asked for money to bring home our army after the taking of Monterey, and to send a commission of one or more of the first men in America to treat for peace, I would have given my vote with more hearty good-will for such a bill than any I ever gave in my whole public life. I often urged this course in private interviews with leading men of both parties. But all in vain. Further battle—more blood—more laurels ; these were the insane and barbarous aspirations of men who now hold the power of a nation boasting itself the exemplar of christendom ; vaunting that it "asks for nothing which is not right, and will submit to nothing which is wrong."

I send you a few copies of my speech on the subject. I only regret that it is not more worthy the great cause it proposes to uphold. I shall be satisfied if it shall induce a few to ponder, not the speech, but the subject which it treats.

Very truly, your friend,

THOMAS CORWIN.

Speech of Mr. Calhoun

In the Senate of the United States, January 4, 1848, upon his Resolutions.

Resolved, That to conquer Mexico and to hold it, either as a province or to incorporate it in the Union,—would be inconsistent with the avowed object for which the war has been prosecuted; a departure from the settled policy of the Government; in conflict with its character and genius; and in the end, subversive of our free and popular institutions.

Resolved, That no line of policy in the further prosecution of the war should be adopted which may lead to consequences so disastrous.

Mr. CALHOUN said :

When I suggested a defensive line, at the last session, this country had in its possession,—through the means of its arms, ample territory, and stood in a condition to force indemnity.—Before then, the successes of our arms had gained all the contiguous portions of Mexico, and our army has ever since held all that it is desirable to hold—that portion whose population is sparse and on that account the more desirable to be held. For I hold it in reference to this war a fundamental principle, that when we receive territorial indemnity it shall be unoccupied territory.

In offering a defensive line, I did it because I believed that in the first place it was the only certain mode of terminating the war successfully. I did it also because I believed that it would be a vast saving of the sacrifice of human life; but above all, I did so because I saw that any other line of policy would expose us to tremendous evil, which these resolutions were intended to guard against. The President took a different view: He recommended a vigorous prosecution of the war—not for conquest—that was disavowed—but for the purpose of conquering peace;—that is, to compel Mexico to sign a treaty making a sufficient cession of territory to indemnify this Government both for the claims of its citizens and for the expenses of the war. Sir, I opposed this policy. I opposed it among other reasons, because I believed that if the war should be ever so successful, there was great hazard to us at least, that the object intended to us at least, that the object intended to be effected by it would not be accomplished. Congress thought differently; ample provisions in men and money were granted for carrying on the war. The campaign has terminated. It has been as successful as the Executive of the country could possibly have calculated. Victory after victory has followed in succession, without a single reverse. Santa Anna was repelled and defeated with all forces—Vera Cruz and the Castle were carried with it. Jalapa, Perote, and Puebla fell, and after two great triumphs of our army, the gates of Mexico opened to us.—Well, sir, what has been accomplished? What has been done? Has the avowed object of the war been attained? Have we conquered peace? Have we obtained a treaty? Have we obtained any indemnity? No, sir; not a single object contemplated has been effected, and what is worse, our difficulties are greater now than they were then, and the objects, forsooth, more difficult to reach than they were before the campaign commenced.

Now Senators have asked what has caused this complete discomfiture of the views of the Executive for which men and money were granted? It is not to be charged to our troops;—they have done all that skill and gallantry was capable of effecting. It must be charged somewhere, and where is it to be charged, but upon the fact that the plan of the campaign was erroneous, that the object pursued was a mistake. We aimed at indemnity in a wrong way. If we had aimed directly to it, we had the means to accomplish it directly; they were in our hands.—But sir, we aimed at indemnity through a treaty. We could not reach it by a treaty with Mexico, and Mexico by refusing to treat simply, could defeat the whole object which we had in view. We put out of our own power and in her hands to say, when the war should terminate.

We have for all our vast expenditure of mon-

eyment, for, I think there will be very little prospect of your getting. You must either hold the country as a province or incorporate it into your union. Shall we do either? That is the question. Far from us be such an act, and for the reasons contained in the resolutions.

The first of these reasons is this: it would be inconsistent with the avowed object for which the war has been prosecuted. That needs no argument after what has been said. Since the commencement of the war, till this moment, every man has disavowed the intention of conquest—of extinguishing the existence of Mexico as a people. It has been constantly proclaimed that the only object was indemnity. And yet, sir, as events are moving on, what we disavow may be accomplished, and what we have avowed may be defeated. Sir, this result will be a dark and lasting imputation on either the sincerity or the intelligence of this country: on its sincerity because, so opposite to your own avowals; on your intelligence, for the want of a clear foresight in so plain a case as not to discern the consequences.

The next reason which my resolutions assign, is, that it is without example or precedent, either to hold Mexico as a province, or to incorporate her into our Union. No example of such a line of policy can be found. We have conquered many of the neighboring tribes of Indians, but we never thought of holding them in subjection—never of incorporating them into our Union. They have either been left as an independent people amongst us, or been driven into the forests.

The next two reasons which I assigned, were, that it would be in conflict with the genius and character of our institutions and subversive of our free government. I take these two together as they are so intimately connected; and now of the first—to hold Mexico in subjection.

Mr. President, there are some propositions too clear for argument; and before such a body as the Senate, I should consider it a loss of time to undertake to prove that to hold Mexico as a subjected province would be hostile, and in conflict with our free popular institutions, and in the end subversive of them.—Sir, he who knows the American Constitution well;—he who has duly studied its character; he who has looked at history and knows what has been the effect of conquests of free states invariably, will require no proof at my hands to show that it would be entirely hostile to the institutions of the country, to hold Mexico as a province. There is not an example on record of any free state ever having attempted the conquest of any territory approaching the extent of Mexico without disastrous consequences. The nation conquered I have in time conquered the conquerors by destroying their liberty.—That will be our case, sir. The conquest of Mexico would add so vast an amount to the patronage of this government, that it would absorb the whole power of the States of the Union. This Union would become imperial, and the States mere subordinate corporations. But the evil will not end there: The process will go on. The same process by which the power would be transferred from the States to the Union, will transfer the whole from this department of the government (I speak of the legislature) to the Executive. All the added power and added patronage which conquest will create, will pass to the Executive. In the end you put in the hands of the Executive the power of conquering you. You give to it, sir, such splendor, such ample means, that with the principle of proscription which unfortunately prevails in our country, that the strug-

gle but people advanced a very high opinion of moral and intellectual improvement and peace, in a civilized state, of maintaining free government; and amongst those who are so purified by the few who have the good fortune of forming a Constitution capable of endurance. It is a remarkable fact in the history of man, that scarcely ever have free popular institutions been formed by wisdom alone that have endured.

Mr. President, with these impressions I cannot approve of the policy recommended by the Executive, nor can I, with my present views, support it. The question is now, what shall be done? It is a great and difficult question, and it is daily becoming more and more difficult. What is to be done; Sir, that question ought not to be for me to answer. I, who have used every effort in my power to prevent this war, and after its commencement have done every thing in my power to diminish the evil to the smallest possible amount.—But I will not shrink from any responsibility whether it properly belongs to me or not.—After saying that I cannot support the course recommended by the Executive, I will proceed to state that which I would propose as the best to be pursued. Well, then, I will say that there is not the smallest chance of our disentangling ourselves from this Mexican concern which threatens us so much—there has not been in my opinion the smallest chance, from the commencement of the war until this time, but by taking a defensive line, doing that now which the President recommends should be done finally after the conquest and taking indemnity into our own hands. To do this depends on our own volition, and not on the fleeing consent of Mexico. Sir, if time had been allowed to the Senate when the Message of the President recommending war was before them, if time had been allowed to the Senate, I would have announced the course of policy which I thought right, but time was not permitted. My opinion was that we should have simply voted Taylor the means of defending himself. That ought to have been done. There then should have been a solemn report from the proper Committee, going into all the circumstances, showing that the republic of Mexico had not yet recognized those hostilities—recommending a provisional army to be directed to a proper point, giving time to the Mexican Congress and Mexican people to have considered whether they would avow or disavow the attacks upon us; and if no satisfaction were obtained, not to make war in this set form, but seize upon the portions of the country contiguous and most convenient to us, and then have assumed the defensive line. These are my views, but unfortunately, we were all acting here under an urgency without time to reflect. We were pushed on and told, if you do not act today nothing can be done.

Well now, sir, as to where the defensive line should be at the present time, I do not presume to offer an opinion. I suggested a line at the last session. I am not prepared to say what would be the proper one at the present time, but I do say that we must vacate the central parts of Mexico. We must fall back, if you choose to use that word, or take a line that shall cover ample territory for indemnity.

For my part, I am not for charging Mexico with the whole expense of the war; but I would take ample territory, and hold it subject to negotiation. Now, sir, I know it will be said that this will be as expensive as the war.

Constitution Jan 16, 1848

ey, for all the loss of blood, and men we have no thing, but the Military glory which the campaign has furnished.

We cannot I presume estimate the expenses of the campaign at less than 40,000,000 of dollars. (I cannot compute the sum with any degree of precision, but I believe I may say about that sum,) and between the sword and disease, many thousands of lives, probably five, six, or seven thousand have been sacrificed; and all this for nothing at all.

But it is said that the occupancy of a defensive line would have been as expensive as the campaign itself. The President has assigned many reasons for that opinion, and the Secretary of War has done the same. I have examined these reasons with care. This is not the proper occasion to discuss them; but I must say, with all possible deference, they are to my mind utterly fallacious. I will put the question in a general point of view, and satisfy the minds of Senators that such is the case.

The line proposed by myself, extending from the Pacific Ocean to the Paso del Norte, would have been covered by the Gulf of California, and wilderness peopled by hostile tribes of Indians; and for its defence, nothing would have been needed beyond a few vessels of war stationed in the Gulf, and a single regiment. From the Paso del Norte to its mouth, we can readily estimate the amount of force necessary for its defence. It was a frontier between Texas and Mexico when Texas has not more than 150,000 of a population—without any standing army whatever, and very few troops. Yet for seven years Texas maintained that frontier line; and that, too, when Mexico was far more consolidated than she is now, when her revolutions were not so frequent, her resources in money were much greater, and Texas her only opponent.—Can any man believe that Mexico, exhausted as she now is—prostrated as she has been—defeated—can any man believe that it will cost us much to defend that frontier as the last campaign has cost? No, sir, I will hazard nothing in asserting that the very interest of the money spent in the last campaign would have secured that line; for an indefinite period and that the men who have lost their lives would have been more than sufficient to defend it.

So much for the past; we now come to the commencement of another campaign; and the question is, what shall be done? The same measures are proposed. It is still "a vigorous prosecution of the war." The measures are identically the same. It is not for conquest—that is now as emphatically disowned as it was in the first instance. The object is not to blot Mexico out of the list of nations, for the President is as emphatic in the expression of his desire to maintain the nationality of Mexico. He desires to see her an independent and flourishing community, and assigns strong and cogent reasons for all that. Well, sir, the question is now, what ought to be done? We are now coming to the practical question. Shall we aim at carrying on another vigorous campaign under present circumstances?

Mr. President, I have examined this question with care, and I repeat, that I cannot support the recommendations of the President. There are many and powerful reasons, stronger than those which existed at the commencement of the last campaign, to justify my opposition now. There is a bill for ten additional regiments now before the Senate, and another bill providing for twenty regiments of volunteers, has been reported, making in all, not less, I suppose, than twenty-five thousand troops, raising the number of troops in the service, as I presume, the Chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs can inform you, to not much less than seventy thousand in the whole. Well, sir, the expense will be much more than that of the last campaign.—It will cost not much short of sixty millions of dollars.

Well, Mr. President, we have now come to the question proposed by these resolutions—where this line of policy will lead you—I may say, will, unless some unexpected event prevent. It will lead to the nationality of Mexico, and the nine millions of people under your hands. It will enable you to assume the

ggle will be greater at every presidential election than our institutions can possibly endure. The end of it will be that that branch of the government will become all-powerful and the result is inevitable—anarchy and despotism.—It is as certain as that I am, this day addressing the Senate.

I come now to the proposition of incorporating her into our Union. Well, as far as law is concerned, that is easy. You can establish a territorial government for every state in Mexico, and there are some twenty of them. You can appoint governors, judges and magistrates. You can give the people a subordinate government, allowing them to legislate for themselves, whilst you defray the cost.—So far as law goes the thing is done. There is no analogy between this and our territorial governments. Our territories are only an off-set of our own people, or foreigners from the same regions from which we came. They are small in number. They are incapable of forming a government. It would be inconvenient for them to sustain a government, if it were formed; and they are very much obliged to the United States for undertaking the trouble, knowing that on the attainment of their majority—when they come to manhood—at twenty-one—they will be introduced to an equality with all the other members of the Union. It is entirely different with Mexico. You have no need of armies to keep your territories in subjection. But when you incorporate Mexico, you must have powerful armies to keep them in subjection. You may call it annexation, but it is a forced annexation, which is a contradiction in terms, according to my conception. You will be involved, in one word, in all the evils which I attribute to holding Mexico as a province. In fact, it will be but a provincial government, under the name of a territorial government. How long will that last? How long will it be before Mexico will be capable of incorporation into our Union? Why, if we judge from the examples before us, it will be a very long time. Ireland has been held in subjection by England for seven or eight hundred years, and yet still remains hostile, although her people are of kindred race with the conquerors. A few French Canadians on this continent yet maintain the attitude of a hostile people; and never will the time come, in my opinion, Mr. President, that these Mexicans will be heartily reconciled to your authority. They have Castilian blood in their veins—the old Gothic, quite equal to the Anglo-Saxon in many respects—in some respects superior. O' all nations of the earth, they are the most pertinacious—have the highest sense of nationality—hold out longest, and often even with the least prospect of effecting their object. On this subject also I have conversed with officers of the army, and they all entertain the same opinion; that these people are now hostile, and will continue so.

But, Mr. President, suppose all these difficulties removed. Suppose these people attached to our Union, and desirous of incorporating with us, ought we to bring them in?—Are they fit to be connected with us? Are they fit for self-government and for governing you? Are you any of you willing that your States should be governed by these twenty odd Mexican States, with a population of about only one million of your blood, and two or three millions of mixed blood, better informed, all the rest pure Indians, a mixed blood, equally ignorant and unfit for liberty, impure races, not as good as the Cherokees or Choctaws?—We make a great mistake, sir, when we suppose that all people are capable of self-government. We are anxious to force free government on all; and I see that it has been urged in a very respectable quarter, that it is the mission of this country to spread civil and religious liberty over all the world, and especially over this continent. It is a great mistake—

I think I have said enough to show that that cannot be, that it will fall far short of it; but I will not repeat the argument. But admitting it should be admitted that by no means concludes the argument; for the sacrifice of men would be infinitely less, and what is more important, you will thereby be able to disengage yourselves. That is the only way by which it can be done. You are tied at present, as it were, to a corpse. My object is to get rid of it as soon as possible.

I look not to Mexico; I look to our own country and her institutions. I look to the liberty of this country and nothing else. Mr. President, if we but preserve our liberty by a proper course of moderation, acting justly towards our neighbor, and wisely in regard to ourselves, if we remain quiet, resting in idle and masterly inactivity, and let our destinies work out their own results, we shall do more for liberty, not only for ourselves but for the example of mankind, than can be done by a thousand victories.

Now, I have delivered my opinion with that candor and frankness which, I hope, become my position on this floor. I shall now propose nothing, but if I find that I can be supported in these my views, I will undertake to raise a committee to deliberate, after consulting with those officers who are now fortunately in this city, upon the best defensive line that can be taken. If it should be fortunately adopted, we may not get peace immediately. The war may continue for some years, but we will accomplish that all-important consideration, the extrication of ourselves and the country from this entanglement with Mexico.

Abraham Lincoln was a Member of Congress at the time of the Mexican War. He strongly opposed the war while it was in progress and severely criticized President Polk on the floor of the House because he did not state in his message when peace might be expected.

In the course of his speech Lincoln said:

At its beginning, Gen. Scott was by this same President driven into disfavor, if not disgrace, for intimating that peace could not be conquered in less than three or four months. But now, at the end of 20 months * * * this same President gives a long message, without showing us that as to the end he himself has even an imaginary conception. As I have said, he knows not where he is. He is a bewildered, confounded, and miserably perplexed man. God grant he may be able to show there is not something about his conscience more painful than his mental perplexity.

Writing to a friend who had objected to his opposition to Polk in relation to this power of the President in war, Lincoln said:

The provision of the Constitution giving the war-making power to Congress was dictated, as I understand it, by the following reasons: Kings had always been involving and impoverishing their people in wars, pretending generally, if not always, that the good of the people was the object. This our convention understood to be the most oppressive of all kingly oppressions, and they resolved to so frame the Constitution that no man should hold the power of bringing this oppression upon us. But your view destroys the whole matter and places our President where kings have always stood.

I now quote from the speech of Charles Sumner, delivered at Tremont Temple, Boston, November 5, 1846.

John A. Andrew, who was the great war governor of Massachusetts, as I remember, presided at this public meeting, which was in support of the independent nomination of Dr. I. G. Howe as Representative in Congress. Mr. Sumner was followed by Hon. Charles Francis Adams, who also delivered an address at this meeting.

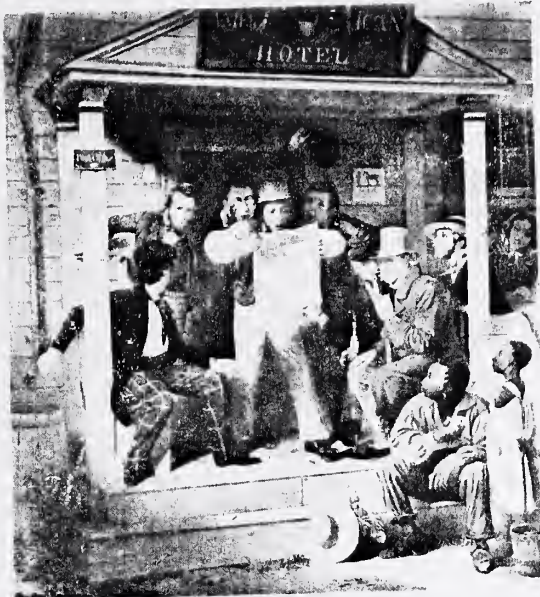
This is the view of Mr. Sumner on the Mexican War, which was then in progress, as expressed by him on this occasion:

The Mexican War is an enormity born of slavery. * * * Base in object, atrocious in beginning, immoral in all its influences, vainly prodigal of treasure and life, it is a war of infamy, which must blot the pages of our history.

In closing his eloquent and powerful address, he said:

Even if we seem to fail in this election we shall not fail in reality. The influence of this effort will help to awaken and organize that powerful public opinion by which this war will at last be arrested. Hang out, fellow citizens, the white banner of peace; let the citizens of Boston rally about it; and may it be borne forward by an enlightened, conscientious people, aroused to condemnation of this murderous war, until Mexico, now wet with blood unjustly shed, shall repose undisturbed beneath its folds. *Congressional Record 10-6-77*

13. MEXICAN NEWS. It is significant that this year of 1917 has heard no editorial rejoicing over the centennial of our victory of 1847 in our most approbrious war, one opposed by such men as Lincoln and Henry Clay. The artist who painted the original of this, Rich and Caton Woodville, was living in Europe at the time. He sent it to the American Art Union, which had Alfred Jones engrave it for circulation among its members in 1851. It is considered one of the finest of American prints. 20x2 by 18x2 inches plus margins. Engraving colored by hand. 875.



UNITED STATES



OF AMERICA

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 89th CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION

No. 3.

PROCEEDINGS PAGES 2095 TO 3316

APPENDIX PAGES A537 TO A844

February 7 to February 18, 1966

paralysis and the original vaccines against diphtheria and other diseases were improved upon after being first introduced.

Lincoln and the War With Mexico

EXTENSION OF REMARKS OF

HON. HAROLD R. COLLIER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 2, 1966

Mr. COLLIER. Mr. Speaker, over a century ago, a great American who had opposed our entry into the war with Mexico did all he could, not to obstruct the war effort, but to aid in its successful prosecution toward victory. Abraham Lincoln disagreed with President James Knox Polk, but as a Member of this body he voted for whatever was necessary for the support of the war.

In these critical days, when so many—but by no means all—of the civil rights leaders are making common cause with those who are hindering our war effort, the words of the Great Emancipator are well worth reading.

On February 1, 1848, in a letter to his law partner, William H. Herndon, Congressman Lincoln wrote:

I have always intended, and still intend, to vote supplies; perhaps not in the precise form recommended by the President, but in a better form for all purposes, except loco-foco party purposes * * *. The Locos are untiring in their effort to make the impression that all who vote supplies, or take part in the war, do, of necessity, approve the President's conduct in the beginning of it; but the Whigs have, from the beginning, made and kept the distinction between the two. In the very first act, nearly all kept the distinction between the two. In the very first act, nearly all the Whigs voted against the preamble declaring that war existed by the act of Mexico, and yet nearly all of them voted for the supplies.

Mr. Lincoln wrote another letter to his partner June 22, 1848, in which he discussed the subject further:

You ask how Congress came to declare that war existed by the act of Mexico. * * * The news reached Washington of the commencement of hostilities on the Rio Grande, and of the great peril of General Taylor's army. Everybody, Whig and Democrat, was for sending them aid, in men and money. It was necessary to pass a bill for this. The Locos had a majority in both Houses, and they brought in a bill with a preamble, saying—whereas war exists by the act of Mexico, therefore we send General Taylor men and money. The Whigs moved to strike out the preamble, so that they could vote to send the men and money, without saying anything about how the war commenced; but, being in the minority they were voted down, and the preamble was retained. Then, on the passage of the bill, the question came upon them, "shall we vote for preamble and bill both together, or against both together." They could not vote against sending help to General Taylor, and therefore they voted for both together.

Representative Lincoln addressed the House of Representatives on July 27, 1848. The following paragraph concerns the Mexican War:

The declaration that we have always opposed the war, is true or false, accordingly as one may understand the term "opposing the war." If to say "the war was unnecessarily and unconstitutionally commenced by the President" be opposing the war, then the Whigs have very generally opposed it. Whenever they have spoken at all, they have said this; and they have said it on what has appeared good reason to them. But if, when the war had begun, and had become the cause of the country, the giving of our money and our blood, in common with yours, was support of the war, then it is not true that we have always opposed the war. With few individual exceptions, you have constantly had our votes here for all the necessary supplies.

And, more than this, you have had the services, the blood, and the lives of our political bretheren in every trial, and on every field. The beardless boy, and the mature man—the humble and the distinguished, you have had them. Through suffering and death, by disease, and in battle, they have endured, and fought, and fell with you.

The Chicago Times—not to be confused with the present-day Chicago Sun-Times—of June 23, 1858, charged that Mr. Lincoln had voted against a bill appropriating money for the purchase of medicine and the employment of nurses for Mexican War veterans. The following day Lincoln wrote from Springfield to Henry C. Whitney:

Give yourself no concern about my voting against the supplies, unless you are without faith that a lie can be successfully contradicted. There is not a word of truth in the charge.

On June 25 Lincoln went into detail about his votes in a letter to Joseph Medill, one of the Chicago Tribune's two co-publishers:

I was in Congress but a single term. I was a candidate when the Mexican War broke out—and I then took the ground, which I never varied from, that the administration had done wrong in getting us into the war, but that the officers and soldiers who went to the field must be supplied and sustained at all events.

When I came into Congress, money was needed to meet the appropriations made, and to be made; and accordingly on the 17th day of February 1848, a bill to borrow \$18,500,000 passed the House of Representatives, for which I voted.

"Again, on the 8th of March 1848, a bill passed the House of Representatives, for which I voted. * * * The last section of the act * * * contains an appropriation of \$800,000 for clothing the volunteers.

"You may safely deny that I ever gave any vote for withholding any supplies whatever, from officers or soldiers of the Mexican War.

The first debate with his famous rival, Senator Stephen A. Douglas, was held at Ottawa, Ill., August 21, 1858. Douglas, referring to Lincoln, said:

Whilst in Congress, he distinguished himself by his opposition to the Mexican War, taking the side of the common enemy against his own country.

Here is Lincoln's reply to the charge:

I think my friend, the judge, is * * * at fault when he charges me at the time when I was in Congress of having opposed our soldiers who were fighting in the Mexican War. * * * Whenever the Democratic Party tried to get me to vote that the war had been righteously begun by the President, I would not do it. But whenever they asked for any



Lincoln Lore

July, 1974

Bulletin of The Lincoln National Life Foundation...Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor. Published each month by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

Number 1637

A NEW VOLUME OF LINCOLN'S WORKS

The unsung heroes of the historical profession are the persons who patiently gather and meticulously annotate the papers of important Americans. The collected works of Henry Clay, Jefferson Davis, Andrew Johnson, John C. Calhoun, Daniel Webster, Ulysses S. Grant, the Adams family, and Woodrow Wilson are currently in the process of being issued in series of bound volumes which will be available in every sizable public library for everyone who has an interest in American history. This inestimably valuable service will mean greater scholarship in greater quantity, for these collections save the student from long trips (and expensive lodging) and from looking up the many names, titles, and organizations mentioned in correspondence. The standards for these volumes are high. Texts are accurate. Routine materials devoid of content are often calendared to save the effort of wading through meaningless scraps and perfunctory verbiage. The footnotes explaining the circumstances of the correspondence are often so elaborate and informative that they constitute a source fully as important as biographies.

Roy P. Basler did much to set these high editorial standards. His eight-volume edition of *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* published by Rutgers University Press in 1953 was a model for later editions of the papers of America's public figures. After twenty-one years, however, a sufficient number of Lincoln manuscripts have come to light to require a supplemental volume to this landmark series. *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln: Supplement 1832-1865*, edited by Roy P. Basler again but published by the Greenwood Press in Westport, Connecticut, is a must for even the smallest and most rudimentary Lincoln collection. Every student of history — indeed, every American citizen — is once again in Mr. Basler's debt.

It is a tribute to the thoroughness of Mr. Basler's original efforts and to the fame of Abraham Lincoln that the *Supplement* publishes for the most part only the shards and fragments of Lincoln's voluminous correspondence. Commonly as many as four items appear on a page of the book — an indication that most of the items, especially after 1860, are one- and two-line endorsements written on the backs of letters seeking Lincoln's authority and consent for appointments to government jobs. As Lincoln himself expressed it in one of the letters published in the *Supplement*, this correspondence deals for the most part with the "same everlasting subject — that of filling offices."

This is not the sort of material that will drastically alter Lincoln's historical reputation, but it is far from useless, especially because Mr. Basler's careful job of annotation explains a myriad of historical events involving many historic personalities. This is the sort of book that will be

mined by many historians for many years to come; the *Supplement* will be cited in footnote after footnote. It would be downright Faustian to attempt to weigh its impact on future Lincoln scholarship. This review will confine itself to suggesting just a few of the ways in which the *Supplement* can help the Lincoln student.

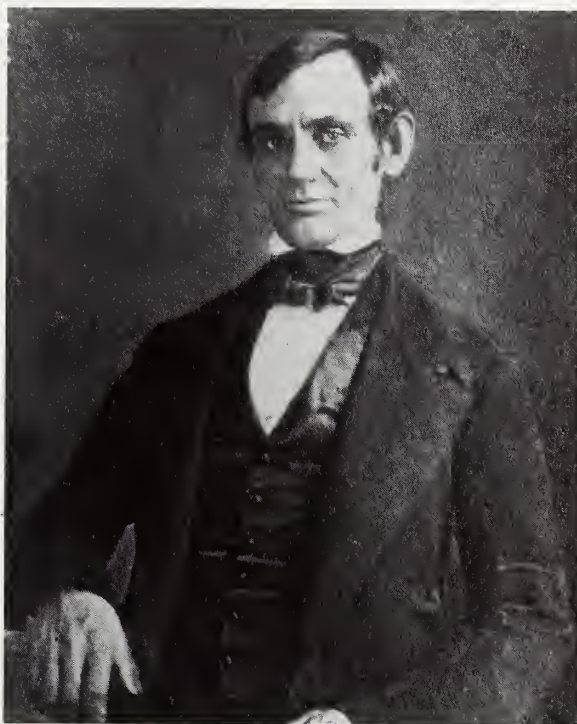
The pre-Civil War materials stem mostly from the period of Lincoln's single term in the House of Representatives in Washington and from the confusing politics of the 1850's. Anyone who is of the mind that Abraham Lincoln became an opponent of the Mexican War because he forgot the simple patriotism of his Western constituents and was dazzled by the Eastern Whig greats will have to cope with the material in the

Supplement. True, Lincoln was, he said, "a good deal flattered by" invitations to speak in places like Boston that were far from his Springfield constituents. Nevertheless, Lincoln was just as "desirous of advising my constituents of the settlement of the claims at an early day" when the claims affected his home base. The latter phrase appears in a letter written to the second auditor of the Treasury Department (a typical example, incidentally, of those pieces of information that are hard to find but which Mr. Basler so generously supplies) concerning the back pay of a soldier in the Illinois Volunteers. Lincoln cooperated even with Democrat Stephen Douglas in seeking a promotion to brevet lieutenant colonel for Brevet Major Backenstos of the Illinois Mounted Rifles for gallant conduct at the Battle of Chapultepec. Lincoln was not neglecting the interests of his constituents even when those constituents were veterans of the war he opposed.

Lincoln's theory of representation would hardly have allowed him to do otherwise. In a letter of recommendation written for one George H. Holtzman, a resident of the District of Columbia, Lincoln said, "I can not recommend him as an Illinoisian; because

applicants now resident here [Illinois] would have just cause to complain of me." He went on to recommend Holtzman as otherwise a worthy candidate; Lincoln proved himself scrupulously faithful to his constituency. The event recalls a little-quoted letter to Elihu Washburne from Volume II of *The Collected Works*:

The objection of your friend at Winnebago rather astonishes me. For a Senator to be the impartial representative of his whole State, is so plain a duty, that I pledge myself to the observance of it without hesitation; but not without some mortification that any one should suspect me of an inclination to the contrary. I was eight years a representative of Sangamon county in the Legislature; and, although, in a conflict of interests between that and other counties, it perhaps would have been my duty to stick to Old



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

Congressman-elect Abraham Lincoln

Sangamon; yet it is not within my recollection that the Northern members ever wanted my vote for any interest of theirs, without getting it. . . . Again, I was a member of Congress one term. . . . Now I think I might appeal to Mr. Turner and yourself, whether you did not always have my feeble service for the asking. In the case of conflict, I might without blame, have preferred my own District. As a Senator, I should claim no right, as I should feel no inclination, to give the central portion of the state any preference over the North, or any other portion of it.

Lincoln was cooperative and not a narrow-minded provincial bounded by the horizons of his constituents, but he recognized his first duty to be service as a deputy of the direct interests of his immediate constituency.

Lincoln's concept of representation as a makeshift for direct democracy rather than as an improvement on and buffer against democracy was also good politics. Basler's *Supplement* confirms again that Lincoln was a skilled practitioner of the political arts. He knew that judges shared his political universe and were not independent arbiters of justice. In discussing an Illinois judiciary bill in 1841, Lincoln put it plainly to John T. Stuart: "The five new Judges will of course be Locos, and they, being a majority, that tribunal necessarily becomes a Loco concern." Lincoln used that fiercely partisan language of political friends and political enemies and that cool calculation and timing which have never ceased to puzzle, shock, and amaze the American people. The *Supplement* prints this example, a letter written in 1845 to Benjamin F. James, editor of the *Tazewell Whig* in Tremont, Illinois:

Yours of the 4th., informing me of Hardin's communication and letter, is received. . . . the certainty that he intends to run for congress . . . [is no] matter of surprise to me. . . . Now as to the probable result of a contest with him. To succeed, I must have 17 votes in convention. To secure these, I think I may safely claim — Sangamon 8 — Menard 2 — Logan 1, making 11, so that, if you and other friends can secure Dr. Boal's entire senatorial district — that is — Tazewell 4 — Woodford 1 and Marshall 1, it just covers the case. . . . Some of Baker's particular friends in Cass, and who are now my friends, think I could carry that county; but I do not think there is any chance for it. Upon the whole, it is my intention to give him the trial, unless clouds should rise, which are not yet discernable. This determination you need not however, as yet, announce in your paper — at least not as coming from me. . . . It is desirable that a sharp look-out should be kept, and every whig met with from those counties, talked to, and initiated. . . . More than this, I want you to watch, and whenever you see a "moccasin track" as indian fighters say, notify me of it. . . . I fear I shall be of a great deal of trouble to you in this matter; but rest assured, that I will be grateful when I can. . . . This letter is, of course, confidential; tho I should have no objection to it's being seen by a few friends, in your discretion, being sure first that they are friends.

For readers interested in Lincoln the man, the glimpses are rare enough. The *Supplement*, however, does reveal one very rare instance of Lincoln's sense of the artificiality of the political world, his sense of isolation as a man with hundreds of political "friends" but few personal ones. On his birthday in 1849, Lincoln wrote privately to David Davis, "Out of more than than [sic] three hundred letters received this session, yours is the second one manifesting the least interest for me personally."

A less revealing personal trait is confirmed by the *Supplement*, Lincoln's personal distaste for alcohol but his toleration of occasional weakness on this score among others. To Richard J. Oglesby in 1854 when Illinois politics were rent with slavery, nativist, and temperance agitations, Lincoln wrote, "Other things being equal, I would much prefer a temperate man, to an intemperate one; still I do not make my vote depend absolutely upon the question of whether a candidate does or does not *taste* liquor." Nine years later, Lincoln expressed the same sort of conviction in the case of Captain John N. Riedenbach of the 158th N.Y. Vols., "dismissed from the service, on the Charge of 'Conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline.'" Lincoln saw "evidence [of] . . . a good deal of boisterous misconduct, during a single case of intoxication," but he inclined "to think he does not habitually get in that condition." Lincoln, therefore, had no objection to Riedenbach's being reappointed to the service.

Lincoln's theory of representation did not prevent him from cooperating with other representatives on projects of broad scope, and it did not prevent him from cultivating contacts outside his district which would be useful should he ever have the chance to represent an area larger than a congressional district. To Thomas J. Henderson of Stark County Lincoln wrote in 1847 of his "intention to snatch a moment now and then, to send documents to some friends out of my district." Lincoln also showed a willingness to follow the people's will, even if it should lead to the advantage of the Democrats. Thus he wrote Ebenezer T. Miller from Washington in 1849:

Your letter in relation to the Post-office at Jacksonville, is received. I do not know, as yet, whether Mr. Happy will be removed, nor if he shall, whether I shall be permitted to name the person to fill the vacancy. If, however, this responsibility shall fall upon me, I shall have no motive in the exercise of it, other than to oblige the good and intelligent people of Jacksonville, and vicinity. And if, with all the lights before me, when the time comes, their preference shall seem to be for you, I shall be most happy to gratify both them and you.

Miller was a Democrat.

Such political flexibility and skill helped to thrust Lincoln to considerable prominence in the politics of the 1850's. There is a very interesting remark in one letter written to Richard Yates in 1855 and published in the *Supplement*; Lincoln was speculating on his chances for election as United States Senator by Anti-Nebraska forces in the Illinois legislature.

The Bissell movement of which you speak, I have had my eye upon, ever since before the commencement of the session; and it is now perhaps as dangerous a card as we have to play against. There is no danger, as I think, of the A[n]ti. N[eb]raska men uniting on him, but the danger is that the Nebraska men, failing to do better, will turn onto him *en masse*, and then a few A.N. men, wanting a pretext only, will join on him, pretending to believe him an A.N. man. He can not get a single *sincere* Anti Nebraska vote. At least, so I think.

William Bissell soon became the first Republican governor of Illinois. Although he was a former Democrat with whom Lincoln had tangled upon occasion in his early years in the Illinois legislature, Lincoln had considerable influence with the Bissell administration and even drafted some of the Governor's messages. A hasty check of the citations of Bissell's name in the index to the original *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* revealed no unfavorable remarks about Bissell after their pre-1850 disagreements. Lincoln's political acumen allowed him to cooperate with and influence men with whom he was not particularly in agreement.

Most of the items in the *Supplement* date from the Civil War, and most of the Civil War items are endorsements. Endorsements do not make particularly delightful reading, and one suspects that some scorn attaches to them. They contain only a sentence or two of Abraham Lincoln's words,



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

Lincoln in Philadelphia, February, 1861

and they deal with matters that might be variously characterized as mundane or sordid, to wit, patronage and the granting of favors. Yet endorsements are not without their value. Governments are inevitably governments of men as well as laws, even in America, and patronage and favors are therefore the nuts and bolts of day-to-day political machinery. Note, for example, how important a knowledge of political appointments is to William Dusenberre's refreshing interpretation of Abraham Lincoln's presidency in *Civil War Issues in Philadelphia, 1856-1865* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1965):

The situation in Philadelphia presents a useful point of departure for interpreting the career of Lincoln, who has sometimes been portrayed as conservative and opportunistic in his antislavery policy. When Lincoln, in the debates with Douglas in 1858, was attacking popular sovereignty on the grounds that territorial slavery should be conclusively prohibited, Philadelphia's Peoples Party upheld popular sovereignty as its rallying point against Buchanan. In February, 1861, Lincoln's Philadelphia speech favoring Negro rights contrasted remarkably with the prevailing local tone. The new President appointed the most radical of the city's important Republicans as head of the custom house. His decision to supply Fort Sumter was more decisively unionist than was editorial opinion in Philadelphia at the moment. William White's speech at the Democratic meeting in 1862 makes the President's well-known letter to Horace Greeley appear as an astute move to disarm the growing opposition, while preparing the grounds for emancipation. After the proclamation was finally issued, the *Ledger's* opposition, the *Inquirer's* hesitation to declare itself, and Mayor Henry's later silence, all showed how far Lincoln's action was beyond the expectation of most local residents. In 1863 the President appointed a Massachusetts general, who felt deep sympathy for Negro soldiers, to command in Philadelphia, and only later replaced this officer with a man whose views corresponded more closely to the local temper.

Readers of *Lincoln Lore* No. 1633 will recall how helpful it would be to have an endorsement or two suggesting the channels through which Alvin Hovey's replacement of Henry Carrington as commander of the military district including Indiana flowed.

Of particular interest to *Lincoln Lore's* readers too is one of the *Supplement's* few letters dating from the Civil War period. Professor Joseph George, Jr., of Villanova University called to the editor's attention a Lincoln letter which he had discovered in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, a letter which establishes conclusively the influence on Lincoln of Charles Janeway Stillé's pamphlet *How A Free People Conduct A Long War*. Professor George discussed the letter and the pamphlet in an article entitled "Charles J. Stillé, 'Angel of Consolation,'" in *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXXXV, pp. 303-315. Professor George also contacted Mr. Basler, and the letter appears in Basler's *Supplement*. This is Lincoln's letter to Charles J. Stillé on December 31, 1862:

Your letter of the 27th and pamphlet were duly received, and for which please accept my sincere thanks. The pamphlet is far the best production upon the subject it treats which I have seen. The reading, and re-reading of it has afforded me great pleasure, and I believe also some profit. May I express the hope that you will not allow your pen to rest.

Interestingly enough, the mention of "re-reading" the pamphlet suggests that Orville H. Browning's recollection that Lincoln read the entire pamphlet aloud to him is not as unlikely to be true as it sounds.

The items from the Civil War period show, among other things, Lincoln's loyalty to his old friends. Lincoln had had a political falling out with Joshua Speed by 1860, though a letter in the *Supplement* shows that Speed's wife was more favorable towards Lincoln's views than her husband. As early as September 4, 1861, however, Lincoln recommended that Simon Cameron grant one of Joshua's requests. The Speed family appears with regularity in the *Supplement*.

Despite the traces of past friendships on Lincoln's Civil War appointments, it is also clear from the correspondence in the *Supplement* that Lincoln's political views had left the past far behind. There are several pieces of correspondence having to do with Negro soldiers, including a very exceptional letter

which Mr. Basler chooses as the *Supplement's* frontispiece. This letter to Charles Sumner is little more than an endorsement, but it is very important:

The bearer of this is the widow of Major Booth, who fell at Fort Pillow. She makes a point, which I think very worthy of consideration which is, widows and children *in fact*, of colored soldiers who fall in our service, be placed in law, the same as if their marriages were legal, so that they can have the benefit of the provisions made the widows & orphans of white soldiers. Please see & hear Mrs. Booth.

In fact, there are several interesting references in the *Supplement* to ethnic and religious groups, all of which tend to confirm Lincoln's tolerant attitudes. In 1861, Lincoln wrote to Secretary of War Simon Cameron in regard to the religious interests of the army personnel at Governor's Island, New York: "A catholic priest attends, & if the Govt. pays the Protestant anything, it is thought, as much might be done for the Catholic." Lincoln ordered Edwin M. Stanton to appoint Cheme M. Levy as an Assistant Quarter-Master because, as Lincoln put it, "I believe we have not yet appointed a Hebrew." Indeed, the most fascinating minor character to appear in the *Supplement* is one Isachar Zacharie, a Jewish doctor whose "peculiar profession," as Lincoln described it, was to operate on the corns and bunions of America's foot-weary army. Zacharie was also a conduit of information on conditions in the South, which apparently he gained from conversations with Jewish Southerners. There are half a dozen passes and letters of introduction for Dr. Zacharie in the *Supplement*.

Let the reader not be deceived: not all the endorsements and fragments from the Civil War period are as interesting as these. Some deal with subjects as lowly and mundane as the appointment of a Superintendent of Life Boats on the Coast of Long Island, just the sort of petty concern that the idea of presidential patronage always conjures up in an American's mind.

Nevertheless, it is to be hoped that this review has suggested something of the range of uses to which Mr. Basler's wonderful *Supplement* may be put by the Lincoln student. It is worth repeating that the book is a *must* for Lincoln students and that we all owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Basler. And it will detract nothing from his already secure fame to add that, in a sense, the *Supplement* is really a cooperative effort. As the discovery of Professor George reveals, Lincoln students found things and called them to Mr. Basler's attention. Many of the items that are reprinted in the *Supplement* are in the hands of private collectors, and they too must be complimented for their generosity. Various Lincoln institutions and universities throughout the country contributed their parts as well. It is certainly to be hoped that this spirit of cooperation among Lincoln students will continue.



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

Joshua and Fanny Speed

CUMULATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY 1973 - 1974

Selections approved by a Bibliography Committee consisting of the following members: Dr. Kenneth A. Bernard, Belmont Arms, 51 Belmont St., Apt. C-2, South Easton, Mass.; Arnold Gates, 289 New Hyde Park Rd., Garden City, N.Y.; Carl Haverlin, 8619 Louise Avenue, Northridge, California; James T. Hickey, Illinois State Historical Library, Old State Capitol, Springfield, Illinois; E. B. (Pete) Long, 607 S. 15th St., Laramie, Wyoming; Ralph G. Newman, 18 E. Chestnut St., Chicago, Illinois; Hon. Fred Schwengel, 200 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C.; Dr. Wayne C. Temple, 1121 S. 4th Street Court, Springfield, Illinois. New items available for consideration may be sent to the above persons, or to the Lincoln National Life Foundation.

1973

KLEMENT, FRANK L.

1973-24

Governor Edward Salomon, W. Yates Selleck, / And The Soldiers' Cemetery At / Getty(s)burg / By Frank L. Klement / Reprinted from the (Transactions of) Wisconsin Academy Of Sciences, Arts & Letters / Volume LXI-1973 / (Cover title) /

Pamphlet, paper, 8 3/4" x 5 1/4", 11-28 pp.

LINCOLN MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

1973-25

Lincoln Memorial University Press / (Device) / Winter, 1973 / Vol. 75, No. 4 / Lincoln Herald / A Magazine devoted to historical / research in the field of Lincolniana and / the Civil War, and to the promotion / of Lincoln Ideals in American / Education. / [Harrogate, Tenn.]

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 10 1/4" x 7 1/4", 125-192 pp., illus., price per single issue, \$1.50.

LINCOLN MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

1973-26

Lincoln Herald / Index / Vol. 74 / Spring, 1972 through Winter, 1972 / Compiled by / Lanta S. Livesay / and / Lois R. Rowlett / Lincoln Memorial University / Harrogate, Tennessee / 1973 / (Cover title) /

Pamphlet, paper, 10 1/4" x 7 1/4", 24 pp.

PRIDEAUX, JAMES

1973-27

The Last / Of / Mrs. Lincoln / A Play In Two Acts / By James Prideaux / (Device) / Dramatists / Play Service / Inc. / [Copyright 1973 by James Prideaux.]

Book, paper, 7 1/4" x 5 1/4", fr., 78 (4) pp., illus., price, \$1.75.

RUSSELL, G. DARRELL, JR.

1973-28

Lincoln And Kennedy: / Looked At / Kindly Together / by / G. Darrell Russell, Jr. / A Hearststone Book / Carlton Press, Inc. New York, N.Y. / [Copyright 1973 by G. Darrell Russell, Jr. All rights reserved.]

Brochure, cloth, 8 1/4" x 5 1/2", 75 pp., price, \$3.50.

SIGELSCHIPER, SAUL

1973-29

The American Conscience / The Drama of the Lincoln-Douglas Debates / Saul Sigelschiffer / Horizon Press (Device) New York / (Double title page) / [Copyright 1973 by Saul Sigelschiffer.]

Book, cloth, 9 1/2" x 6 1/4", 488 (roman and numerical numbers included) pp., illus., maps on front and back covers, price, \$12.95.

1974

BASLER, ROY P.

1974-1

The Collected Works Of / Abraham Lincoln / Supplement 1832-1865 / Roy P. Basler, Editor / Contributions in American Studies, Number 7 / (Device) / Greenwood Press / Westport, Connecticut / London, England / [Copyright 1974 by Roy P. Basler. All rights reserved.]

Book, cloth, 9 1/2" x 6 3/4", x1 p., 320 (4) pp., illus., price, \$15.00.

BRINKLEY, PHYLLIS C.

1974-2

Abraham Lincoln And His Wife, Mary: / A Study Of Two Human Beings / By Phyllis C. Brinkley / Waunakee, Wisconsin / (Portrait) / Address At Annual Meeting / Lincoln Fellowship Of Wisconsin / Madison / 1973 / Historical Bulletin No. 29 / 1974 / (Cover title) /

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 10" x 7 1/2", 12 pp., illus., price, \$1.25. Send to Mrs. Carl Wilhelm, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 816 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.

COLEMAN, WILLIAM R.

(1974)-3

(Device) / President / Abraham Lincoln / to Mrs. J. K. Dougherty / Facsimile of a Pass / With a note pertaining / thereto / February 17, 1865 / (Portrait of Lincoln facing right) / (Cover title) / [Illustrated facsimile of the original pass from the collection of William R. Coleman attached to inside back page. The type has been set by Burck's Press of San Bernardino.]

Folder, paper, 7 1/4" x 5 1/4", (4) pp., one sheet folded once, illus.

DYBA, THOMAS J.

1974-4

A / Chronology / Of / The Only Home / Abraham Lincoln / Ever Owned / (Picture of Abraham Lincoln's Springfield Home) / by / Thomas J. Dyba / (Cover title) / [Printed in February, 1974.]

Folder, paper, 8 1/2" x 3 1/2", single sheet folded twice, printed chronology covering statistical data on Abraham Lincoln's Springfield Home from April 23, 1839 up to and including the present and future dates.

ILLINOIS STATE HISTORICAL LIBRARY 1974-5

Illinois / History / Volume 27 / Number 5 / February 1974 / Abraham Lincoln / Those Infamous Letters — The / Many Faces of Lincoln — A World / View of America's Hero — A Journey / after Death — Lincoln's Namesake / Town — Presidential Election of / 1848 — An Unusual White House / Affair — Death Stalks the / Lincoln's — The Problem of / Amnesty — A Poet's View of / Lincoln — Three Presidential / Assassinations — The Other / Mary Lincoln — From Indiana to / Illinois — Lincoln in My Hometown / (Portrait) / A Lincoln Portrait from Germany / (Cover title) / [Copyright 1974 Illinois State Historical Society. Published by the Illinois State Historical Library for the Illinois State Historical Society, Old State Capitol, Springfield, Illinois 62706.]

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 10" x 7 1/4", pages 99-119, illus., a magazine for young people, price, 20¢.

LLOYD, JOHN A.

1974-6

Vignettes / Of / Lincoln / by John A. Lloyd / Publisher: by / The Union Central Life Insurance Company / and / Union Central Assurance Corporation / Cincinnati / 1974 / [Copyright 1974 by John A. Lloyd. First printing, 1974.]

Brochure, cloth, 9 1/4" x 6", fr., vii p., 63 (1) pp., illus., price, \$3.00.

LLOYD, JOHN A.

1974-7

Address of John A. Lloyd / to / Lincoln Memorial Meeting / of / Queen City Optimists Club / Cincinnati / February 9, 1974 / *Lincoln Defines America* / (Caption title) / [Copyright 1974 by John A. Lloyd.]

Pamphlet, paper, 8 1/2" x 5 1/4", 10 pp.

MOCHIZUKI, MASAHARU

1974-8

(Device) / (Portrait of Lincoln facing right) / (1809-1865) / 16th President of U.S.A. / No. 16 / Tokyo Lincoln Center / Report No. Sixteen / February 12, 1974 / Tokyo Lincoln Center / Masaharu Mochizuki, Director / 2-1, Sarugaku-cho 1-chome, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan / Phone 291 — 1860 / Mail address: P.O. Box 5001 Tokyo International, Tokyo Japan / (Cover title) / [Printed in Tokyo, Japan in both Japanese and English languages.]

Pamphlet, paper, 10 1/4" x 7 1/4", 6 (2) pp., illus. (List of acquisitions, tribute write up on Abraham Lincoln, listings on Lincoln Report and collected publications of the Lincoln Tokyo Center.)

LINCOLN NATIONAL LIFE FOUNDATION 1974-9

Lincoln Lore / Bulletin of The Lincoln National Life Foundation . . . Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor. Published each / month by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801. / Number 1631, January 1974 to Number 1636, June 1974.

Folder, paper, 11" x 8 1/2", 4 pp., illus. Number 1631, Henry Clay's First Biographer, January 1974; Number 1632, Treason In Indiana: A Review Essay, February 1974; Number 1633, Treason In Indiana: A Review Essay, March 1974; Number 1634, How A Free People Conduct A Long War, April 1974; Number 1635, *Miscegenation: Broad Farce Or Political Dirty Trick?*, May 1974; Number 1636, *Miscegenation: Broad Farce Or Political Dirty Trick?*, June 1974.



Lincoln Lore

October, 1974

Bulletin of The Lincoln National Life Foundation...Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor. Published each month
by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

Number 1640

A HAWK BECOMES A DOVE: Henry Clay's Speech on the Mexican War, November 13, 1847

On January 8, 1813, Henry Clay spoke in the House of Representatives in support of a bill to raise an additional twenty regiments of infantry for the war with England. It was one of Clay's more vituperative attacks on what he called "the parasites of opposition," and the speech said nothing of recruitment problems, availability of soldiers, casualties, or specific military needs. Suggesting that their previous opposition to Republican administrations had encouraged the enemy to make war on American independence, Clay accused the Federalists of "tacking with every gale, displaying the colors of every party, and of all nations, steady only in one unalterable purpose, to steer, if possible, into the haven of power." They were "for war, and no restrictions, when the administration is for peace," and they were "for peace and

restrictions, when the administration is for war." Thus he reduced the arguments used by the Federalists against the War of 1812 to hypocritical cant:

When, at length, foreign nations, perhaps, emboldened by the very opposition here made, refused to listen to the amicable appeals made, and repeated and reiterated by administration, to their justice and to their interests—when, in fact, war with one of them became identified with our independence and our sovereignty, and it was no longer possible to abstain from it, behold the opposition becoming the friends of peace and of commerce. They tell you of the calamities of war—its tragical events—the squandering away of your resources—the waste of the public treasure, and the spilling of innocent blood. They tell you that honor



BATTLE OF BUENA VISTA.

VIEW OF THE BATTLE GROUND AND BATTLE OF "THE ANCHUTRA" FOUGHT NEAR BUENA VISTA, MEXICO FEBRUARY 23RD 1847. (LOOKING S.W.E.S.T.)

Courtesy Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas

FIGURE 1. Henry Clay's son was killed at the Battle of Buena Vista just nine months before Clay delivered his speech on the Mexican War. Ronnie C. Tyler in "The Mexican War: A Lithographic Record" (*Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, LXXVII [July, 1973], 1-84) says that Henry R. Robinson, the lithographer of the above print, sent Clay a copy of the print and later published Clay's letter of acknowledgment to advertise his art. The battle was also instrumental in bringing General Zachary Taylor the fame which launched him to the Whig presidential nomination in 1848, a nomination which Clay himself desired.

is an illusion!

Of one Federalist opponent who had criticized Thomas Jefferson, Clay said that, whereas "the name of Jefferson will be hailed as the second founder of the liberties of this people," the Federalist's name will "be consigned to oblivion, or . . . live only in the treasonable annals of a certain junto."

Thirty-four years later, on November 13, 1847, Henry Clay spoke to a mass meeting in Lexington, Kentucky on the subject of another war, the War with Mexico. Clay, now a Whig, was in much the same position that his Federalist opponents had occupied years earlier, for the War with Mexico was the work of President James K. Polk's Democratic administration. Moreover, Clay himself was seeking the haven of power. Although he had proclaimed retirement after his loss to Polk in the presidential election of 1844, the Sage of Ashland was still interested in the presidency and would soon make known his availability as Whig nominee for 1848.

Nevertheless, Clay's speech began with careful disclaimers of any political intent; he was "most solicitous that not a solitary word may fall from me, offensive to any party or person in the whole extent of the Union." After all, Clay was "in the Autumn of life" and felt "the frost of Age" (he was 70 years old). He came to speak only reluctantly. He feared for "the harmony, if not the existence, of our Union," and, "while a single pulsation of the human heart remains, it should, if necessary, be dedicated to the service of one's country."

Clay then launched forth into a catalogue of the calamities of war highly reminiscent of those which he denounced Federalists for reciting years before. "In the sacrifice of human life, and in the waste of human treasure, in its losses, and in its burdens," he said, "it affects both belligerent nations, and its sad effects of mangled bodies, of death, and of desolation, endure long after its thunders are hushed in peace. War unhinges society, disturbs its peaceful and regular industry, and scatters poisonous seeds of disease and immorality, which continue to germinate and diffuse their baneful influence long after it has ceased. Dazzling by its glitter, pomp, and pagentry, it begets a spirit of wild adventure and romantic enterprise, and often disqualifies those who embark in it, after their return from the bloody fields of battle, from engaging in the industrious and peaceful vocations of life."

The most startling statement in the speech was Clay's assertion that he would not have voted with most Whigs for the bill which raised 50,000 volunteers once the hostilities had commenced. That bill also contained in its preamble a statement "falsely attributing the commencement of the War to the act of Mexico."

I have no doubt [said Clay] of the patriotic motives of those who, after struggling to divest the bill of that flagrant error, found themselves constrained to vote for it. But I must say that no earthly consideration would have ever tempted or provoked me to vote for a bill, with a palpable falsehood stamped on its face. Almost idolizing truth as I do, I never, never could have voted for that bill.

Only fourteen Whigs had voted against the bill in the House in 1846; only two Whig Senators opposed the measure. Clay thus aligned himself, after the fact, with the most radical members of the Whig party, men who, for the most part, were noted for their anti-slavery convictions. He was endorsing the votes of John Quincy Adams, George Ashmun, Joseph Grinnel, Charles Hudson, and D.P. King of Massachusetts; Henry Cranston of Rhode Island; Erastus Culver of New York; John Strohm of Pennsylvania; Luther Severance of Maine; and Joshua Giddings, Columbus Delano, Joseph Root, David Tilden, and Joseph Vance of Ohio.

The "immortal fourteen" had been immediately compared to the Federalists who had opposed the War of 1812 and accused of treason. Clay noted the charge, and, as a fervent supporter of that earlier war, was in a good position to dismiss it:

The exceptionable conduct of the Federal party, during the last British War, has excited an influence in the prosecution of the present War, and prevented a just discrimination between the two Wars. That was a War of National defence, required for the vindication of the National rights and honor, and demanded by the indignant voice of the people . . . It was a just War, and its great object, as announced at the time, was "Free Trade and Sailors' Rights," against the intolerable and oppressive acts of British power on the ocean. The justice of the War, far from being denied or controverted, was admitted by the Federal party, which only questioned it on considerations of

policy. Being deliberately and constitutionally declared, it was, I think, their duty to have given to it their hearty cooperation. But the mass of them did not. They continued to oppose and thwart it, to discourage loans and enlistments, to deny the power of the General Government to march the militia beyond our limits, and to hold a Hartford Convention, which, whatever were its real objects, bore the aspect of seeking the dissolution of the Union itself. They lost, and justly lost, the public confidence. But has not an apprehension of a similar fate, in a state of a case widely different, repressed a fearless expression of their real sentiments in some of our public men?

Clay was right. An extreme statement verifying his point had come from one-time Federalist Justin Butterfield. Asked whether he would oppose the Mexican War as he had the War of 1812, Butterfield replied: "No, by G-d, I opposed one war, and it ruined me, and hence forth I am for War, *Pestilence and Famine*." Clay claimed, however, that the Mexican War was "no War of Defence, but one unnecessary and of offensive aggression." Likewise, the Whig party, unlike the Federalist, had been so restrained in its opposition that "Far from interposing any obstacles to the prosecution of the War, if the Whigs in office are reproachable at all, it is for having lent too ready a facility to it, without careful examination into the objects of the War."

Clay's defense of the "immortal fourteen" and the Whig party in general from charges of Federalist defeatism or treason glossed over some complicating factors. When he claimed that the Federalists had opposed the war only on grounds of policy, Clay referred only to some Federalist arguments at certain stages in the conflict over the War of 1812. He no doubt referred to the Federalists' concern over the War's damage to shipping interests and to their argument that the United States should not fight England, whatever the injustice of England's treatment of American sailors and ships, because England was waging the world's battle against the French imperial despot Napoleon. He ignored the argument (that developed after the war began) that there was no cause for war once England had rescinded the obnoxious orders which had caused America's difficulties on the seas. Word that these had been rescinded reached America shortly after the declaration of war, but Clay in 1813 had simply countered that the War of 1812 was like the American Revolution, "an example of a war began [*sic*] for one object and prosecuted for another."

Clay also carefully avoided mentioning one of the objects for which the War of 1812 had been prosecuted: acquisition of Canada. Clay had discussed invading Canada before 1812, and he did not rely on the argument of the Revolutionary generation that the inhabitants of Canada would rise to greet their American liberators with open arms: after conquering Quebec, Clay speculated in 1811, "there would be no European enemy behind to be apprehended; but the people of the country might rise; and he warned gentlemen who imagined that the affections of the Canadians were with us against trusting too confidently on a calculation, the basis of which was treason." He had allowed himself to think expansively in 1817 too:

Every man who looks at the Constitution in the spirit to entitle him to the character of an American statesman, must elevate his views to the height which this nation is destined to reach in the rank of nations. We are not legislating for this moment only, or for the present generation, or for the present populated limits of these States; but our acts must embrace a wider scope—reaching northwestwardly to the Pacific, and more southwardly to the river [Rio Grande] del Norte. Imagine this extent of territory covered with sixty, or seventy, or an hundred millions of people.

After justifying the "immortal fourteen" and implying that other Whigs had been too hasty to support the war, Clay quickly shifted his ground: "Without indulging in an unnecessary retrospect and useless reproaches on the past, all hearts and heads should unite in the patriotic endeavor to bring it to a satisfactory close." Clay then advanced a bizarre constitutional argument that was defied by previous American experience. He said that Congress "must . . . possess the authority, at any time, to declare for what purposes it [a war] shall be farther prosecuted." All would have granted, no doubt, that the Senate had such power in a negative sense by being able to refuse consent to war-ending treaties which went too far or failed to go far enough. Congress, Clay asserted, could omit to "proclaim the objects for which it [war] was com-

menced or has since been prosecuted," and then "the President, . . . is, necessarily, left to his own judgment to decide upon the objects, to the attainment of which that force shall be applied." In the War of 1812, Clay had to admit, there had been no such direction, but the "whole world knew that it was a War waged for Free Trade and Sailors' Rights." The solution now was simple: "Let it [Congress] resolve, simply, that the War shall or shall not be a War of conquest; and, if a War of Conquest, what is to be conquered. Should a resolution pass, disclaiming the design of Conquest, peace would follow in less than sixty days; if the President would conform to his constitutional duty."

Clay made clear that, if the vote were for a war of conquest, it must not mean the conquest of all Mexico. Although he felt sure that the United States had the requisite power to conquer Mexico, Clay invoked the traditional arguments against wars of conquest. Historical example was against it: Caesar's and Napoleon's countries lost their liberties after wars of conquest sapped their strength. A standing army occupying a foreign country "and accustomed to trample upon the liberties of a foreign people" would become ready instruments of an ambitious chieftan who desired to bring about a coup d'état. A country based on liberty could not keep the Mexicans under military rule, and annexation was out of the question. "Does any considerate man believe it possible," asked Clay, "that two such immense countries, with territories of nearly equal extent, with population so incongruous, so different in race, in language, in religion and in laws, could be blended together in one harmonious mass, and happily governed by one common authority?"

Although Clay invoked the concept of racial differences to explain the poor wisdom of Mexican annexation, he was more careful than other Whigs to avoid implications that the Mexicans were a degraded or inferior race. The *National Intelligencer* would gag in December at the thought of adding "unknown" tribes and having "many-colored representatives" in the legislatures, and Virginia's *Richmond Whig* in 1846 had found "far more to dread from the acquisition of the debased population who have been summarily manufactured into American citizens, than to hope from the extension of our territorial limits." Clay used "race" to describe national pride, identity, and variety but eschewed ranking the different peoples. He put the greatest burden not on differences of race or color but on "the difficulty of combining and consolidating together, conquering and conquered nations."

After the lapse of eight hundred years [Clay explained with historical examples], during which the Moors held the conquest of Spain, the indomitable courage, perseverance and obstinacy of the Spanish race finally triumphed over and expelled the African invaders from the Peninsula. And even within our time, the colossal power of Napoleon, when at its loftiest height, was incompetent to subdue and subjugate the proud Castilian. And here in our own neighborhood, Lower Canada, which near one hundred years ago, after the conclusion of the seven year's War, was ceded by France to Great Britain, remains a foreign land in the midst of the British provinces, foreign in feelings and attachment, and foreign in laws, language and religion. And what has been the fact with poor, gallant, generous and oppressed Ireland? Centuries have passed since the overbearing Saxon overran and subdued the Emerald Isle . . . Insurrection and rebellion have been the order of the day; and yet, up to this time, Ireland remains alien in feeling, affection and sympathy toward the power which has so long borne her down. Every Irishman hates, with a mortal hatred, his Saxon oppressor.

Sympathy for Ireland had been much on Henry Clay's mind of late. Newspapers had given wide coverage to Clay's speech in New Orleans earlier in the year on the subject of relief of famine-stricken Ireland. It had been more than a run-of-the-mill public appearance because Clay had (privately) blamed foreign Catholic voters for having a hand in defeating him in 1844. Despite this and some alleged personal sympathy for the Native American movement, Clay apparently spurned suggestions that the Whigs cultivate nativist and anti-Catholic feelings. Clay's discussion of religious differences between Mexicans and Americans in his Lexington speech, though it clearly identified Catholicism as a stumbling block to annexation, was notable for its moderation and for its final complimentary remarks on the Pope:

[Clay compared Mexico and Ireland with England and America.] The Catholic Religion predominates in both the

former; the Protestant among both the latter. Religion has been the fruitful cause of dissatisfaction and discontent between the Irish and the English nations. Is there no reason to apprehend that it would become so between the people of the United States and those of Mexico, if they were united together? Why should we seek to interfere with them in their mode of worship of the common Saviour? We believe that they are wrong, especially in the exclusive character of their faith, and that we are right. They think that they are right and we wrong. What other rule can there be than to leave the followers of each religion to their own solemn convictions of conscientious duty toward God? Who but the great Arbiter of the Universe can judge in such a question? For my own part, I sincerely believe and hope, that those who belong to all the departments of the Great Church of Christ, if, in truth and purity, they conform to the doctrines which they profess, will ultimately secure an abode in those regions of bliss which all aim finally to reach. I think that there is no potentate in Europe, whatever his religion may be, more enlightened, or at this moment so interesting, as the liberal head of the Papal See.

Despite the conciliatory religious note which constituted a non sequitur in the remarks on the Pope (and which was, therefore, more probably a matter of domestic political relations to Catholic voters than of reasoned argument on the Mexican War), Clay did add the degrading remark that he feared Mexico's population was "Unprepared, . . . for the practical enjoyment of self-government." "Those, whom God and geography have pronounced shall live asunder," concluded Clay, "could never be permanently and harmoniously united together."

Aside from the practical difficulties from the standpoint of the United States's own interests, Clay did mention the moral problem. Everyone looked upon the partitioning of Poland as a "rapacious and detestable deed," and Clay feared that the United States did "not now stand well in the opinion of other parts of Christendom" because we too seemed "actuated by a spirit of rapacity, and an inordinate desire for territorial aggrandizement." Clay expressed a personal wish that the United States gain no Mexican territory at all from the contest, but he was willing to grant a little incidental expansion:

For one, I desire to see no part of her territory torn from her by war. Some of our people have placed their hearts upon the acquisition of the Bay of San Francisco in Upper California. To us, as a great maritime power, it might prove to be of advantage hereafter. . . . To Mexico, which can never be a great maritime power, it can never be of much advantage. If we can obtain it by fair purchase for a just equivalent, I should be happy to see it so acquired. As whenever the War ceases, Mexico ought to be required to pay the debts due our citizens [incurred before the war and defaulted], perhaps an equivalent for the Bay may be found in that debt, our Government assuming to pay to our citizens whatever portion of it may be applied to that object. But it should form no motive in the prosecution of the War, which I would not continue a solitary hour for the sake of that harbor.

Clay was more willing to tolerate the sort of expansion the North desired than the sort the South desired. He insisted that the United States "disavow, in the most positive manner, any desire on our part to acquire any foreign territory whatever, for the purpose of introducing slavery into it." Here again, as in his apology for the "immortal fourteen," Clay was approaching the more radical elements in the Northern wing of the Whig party who claimed that the Mexican War was a pro-slavery plot to gain more territory for slave expansion and eventually more slave-state representatives in the Congress. Yet Clay merely *approached* their position; he did not adopt it. He added immediately: "I do not know that any citizen of the United States entertains such a wish." Nor did he mention specifically the Wilmot Proviso, which would have forbidden slavery in any territory acquired from Mexico as a result of the war. To say that the United States should "disabuse the public mind in any quarter of the Union of the impression, if it anywhere exists, that a desire for conquest is cherished for the purpose of propagating or extending Slavery" was not precisely to say that slavery would not be allowed in anything acquired by conquest.

Having approached the Joshua Giddingses of the Northern wing of his party, Clay very quickly repaired his fences in the rear. Although he had "ever regarded Slavery as a great evil, a wrong, for the present, I fear, an irremediable wrong, to its unfortunate victims," he was, of course, no abolitionist. More

than that, however, Clay hinted that he might not be looking forward to any kind of abolition, no matter how gradual in the Deep South. "In States where the slaves outnumber the whites, as in the case with several, the blacks could not be emancipated and invested with all the rights of freedom, without becoming the governing race in those States. Collisions and conflicts between the two races would be inevitable, and after shocking scenes of rapine and carnage, the extinction or expulsion of the blacks would certainly take place." Clay added, "In the State of Kentucky, near fifty years ago, I thought the proportion of slaves, in comparison with the whites, was so inconsiderable that we might safely adopt a system of gradual emancipation that would ultimately eradicate this evil in our State." What was one to infer from this? The Southerner *could* infer that Clay did not believe in immediate emancipation *anywhere* and that he believed in gradual emancipation only where blacks constituted a small part of the population. Clay did finally state that slavery had "continued, . . . for a period of more than a century and a half, and it may require an equal or longer lapse of time before our country is entirely rid of the evil." Clay still held out that ultimate ideal of a free country, but "ultimate" in this speech meant almost a *minimum* of 150 years and an open-ended maximum.

Every authority agrees that Clay's speech on the Mexican War was, as biographer Glyndon Van Deusen puts it, "really a bid for the nomination" for president in 1848. Yet none has analyzed the speech to see to whom it was a bid. Clearly, he was reaching out to the Northern wing of the Whig party and to the more radical members of that wing. No doubt as Clay read the situation in the autumn of 1847, the Zachary Taylor presidential boom was faltering. He must have surmised that it foundered on the rocks of Northern discontent with a Southern-sponsored slave-owning candidate whose views on slavery were not widely known. Clay would reach out to that constituency without totally losing his Southern moorings. Or perhaps he may even have realized that it would divorce him from the South more than ever. In a confidential letter to Horace Greeley, Clay suggested that the speech would make "me a Western man (I protest being considered as a *Southern* man) with Northern principles," but this, of course, was what Greeley as an anti-slavery Northern Whig wanted to hear. New York's William Seward knew the purpose of the speech. In letters to his wife he said of Clay's speech that it was "surpassingly beautiful and will affect many minds. But it is too late." More to the point, Seward said, "Mr. Clay's notices of slavery and of the extension of slavery will not satisfy the North."

Whig Congressman-elect Abraham Lincoln was in Lexington when Clay gave his speech, and many historians have assumed that he would not have missed this, his only chance to hear his "beau ideal of a statesman" speak in person. There is no direct evidence that Lincoln did hear the speech, however. When he commended "Mr. Clay's eloquence" in his eulogy on Clay in 1852, Lincoln asserted that "those who heard Mr. Clay, never failed to be moved by it, or ever afterwards, forgot the impression." Yet, Lincoln did not say that he had had that privilege himself, and there were doubtless many reminiscences of hearing Clay's speeches in print by that time.

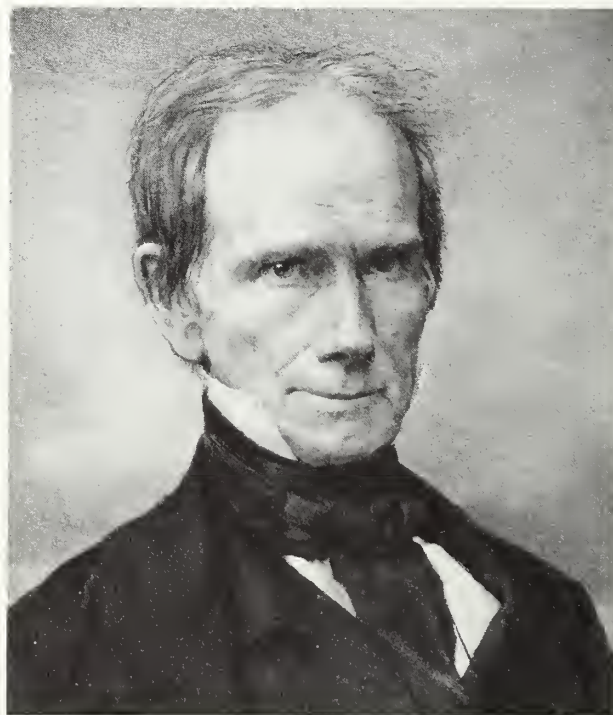
Nor did Clay's speech on the Mexican War notably influence Lincoln's famous speech in opposition to that war. Lincoln attacked the Mexican War in the House on January 12, 1848, but he confined himself largely to the issue of aggression. His concern was with the legal border of Texas and, thus, with the question whether hostilities had really begun on American soil. Lincoln scrupulously avoided even Clay's cautious intimations about the motive behind the war. Lincoln did say in a suggestive tone that President Polk had had "some strong motive—what, I will not stop now to give my opinion concerning," but he never mentioned slavery in the speech. Clay addressed his speech primarily to the question of war aims and attacked the movement to acquire all of Mexico at great length. By the time Lincoln delivered his speech, Polk had stated "that the separate national existence of Mexico, shall be maintained," and he therefore had less reason to attack the movement Clay had attacked. Still, Lincoln said little of the legitimate or illegitimate purposes of the war and mentioned some of the various objectives considered only to show that Polk was confused and had no clear purpose.

By February of 1848, if not before, Lincoln had embraced a

view of the proper objectives of the war. By that time Lincoln had endorsed the "defensive-line strategy" according to which American forces were to assume a stationary position along the Rio Grande to the southern border of New Mexico and then along the thirty-second parallel. This not only would establish the Rio Grande as the Texas border, but, as Lincoln said, "we shall probably be under a sort of necessity of taking some territory" but none "extending so far South, as to enlarge and aggravate [*sic*] the distracting question of slavery."

Ironically, the defensive-line strategy was largely the brain child of John C. Calhoun, with whom Lincoln was not often in agreement, but Lincoln claimed that Zachary Taylor "declared for, and, in fact originated, the defensive line policy." Herein lies an irony in all the concern over Lincoln's relationship to Clay's speech. Whether he heard it or not, it failed to have the desired effect on him, for Lincoln was supporting the movement to make Zachary Taylor the Whig presidential nominee at least as early as December 10, 1847.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Preparation of the above analysis of Henry Clay's speech would have been impossible without the aid of the following works: Glyndon G. Van Deusen, *The Life of Henry Clay* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1937); George Rawlings Poage, *Henry Clay and the Whig Party* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1936); Samuel Eliot Morison, Frederick Merk, and Frank Friedel, *Dissent in Three American Wars* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970); James F. Hopkins, ed., *The Papers of Henry Clay, Volume I: The Rising Statesman, 1797-1814* ([Lexington]: University of Kentucky Press, 1959); John H. Schroeder, *Mr. Polk's War: American Opposition and Dissent, 1846-1848* ([Madison]: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973); and G.S. Borit, "A Question of Political Suicide: Lincoln's Opposition to the Mexican War," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, LXVII (February, 1974), 79-100.



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

FIGURE 2. Henry Clay as he looked about three years after he delivered his speech against the Mexican War in Lexington, Kentucky. Though seventy when he delivered the speech, Clay made a bid for the presidential nomination the next year and was elected Senator when he was seventy-two. At seventy-three he played a prominent role in bringing about the Compromise of 1850. He was seventy-five when he died in Washington, D.C.



Lincoln Lore

June, 1976

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Number 1660

DID LINCOLN CAUSE LOGAN'S DEFEAT?

Until the birth of the Republican party, Illinois was a Democratic state. When Abraham Lincoln served in the United States House of Representatives (1847-1849), he was the lone Whig from Illinois, and his Seventh Congressional District gained the reputation of being the banner Whig district in the state. In the next Congress, Illinois again sent only one Whig, but this man, Lincoln's friend Edward D. Baker, won in another district. The Seventh fell to the Democrats in the congressional election following Lincoln's election. Another friend of Abraham Lincoln, former law partner Stephen Trigg Logan, was the Whig candidate who went down to defeat in the Seventh Congressional District, and many historians have said that the burden of Congressman Lincoln's unpopular record of opposition to the Mexican War doomed Logan's chance of victory.

The dates involved in this problem are confusing to the modern reader and should be explained here before discussing the election. Doubtless many a modern voter gasped when television announcers reported, along with the results of the recent Presidential primary in Pennsylvania, that there were no less than twenty-two primaries to go before the November elections. Nineteenth-century American voters experienced a similarly endless churning of the political cauldron *every year*. There were no Presidential primaries, of course, but election dates were not systematized and elections were occurring at all times somewhere in the United States. The elections

The Field of Waterloo is ours!



THE WHIG CITADEL TAKEN!

The "Dead District" Redeemed!!

HARRIS ELECTED!!!

STATE REGISTER OFFICE, AUGUST 9.

It affords us heart-felt gratification to announce to our friends that the "dead district" is redeemed from the thralldom of whigery. Nobly have our friends performed their duty and most nobly have their gallant exertions been repaid! We can say no more now, but give a statement of the majorities below, which the official returns will not materially change. Huzza for Cass and Butler, Harris and Victory!!

	Harris.	Logan.
Putnam, - - - -	20 maj.	—
Marshall, - - - -	96	—
Woodford, - - - -	190	—
Tazewell, - - - -	—	200 maj.
Logan, - - - -	—	10
Mason, - - - -	116	—
Menard, - - - -	76	—
Sangamon, - - - -	—	263
Morgan, - - - -	64	—
Scott, - - - -	63	—
Cass, - - - -	7	—
	632	473

Harris' majority 159!!

which sent Lincoln and his colleagues to the House of Representatives were held over a period of a year and three months. Lincoln's was one of the earliest. He was elected early in August of 1846, but he did not take his seat in the House until December of 1847. Louisiana, by contrast, held its election for representatives to the same Congress in November of 1847, just a month before Congress convened. There were not even standardizations by region. Though Lincoln was elected in August of 1846, neighboring Indiana chose Lincoln's Hoosier colleagues a full year later, in August of 1847.

Stephen Logan's ill-starred election day, then, was August 7, 1848. Three months later Illinois voters returned to the polls to select a President of the United States, either Democrat Lewis Cass or Whig Zachary Taylor. Congressman Abraham Lincoln remained in Washington after Congress adjourned on August 14, 1848, to help the Whig Central Committee with the national Whig campaign. Illinois Whigs chose him as an Assistant Elector on August 23, 1848. This meant that he had been chosen to make speeches in Taylor's behalf in Illinois. Despite the choice as Assistant Elector, Congressman Lincoln remained in Washington throughout August and travelled to Massachusetts in September to campaign for Taylor. Time was growing short to fulfill his duties as Assistant Elector in Illinois, so Lincoln went directly to Albany from Massachusetts, and then to Buffalo, from which he took a steamer across the Great Lakes to Illinois. By October 6, he was delivering a

speech in Chicago. On October 10, 1848, he arrived in Springfield to campaign for Taylor in his own district. By the first week in December, Congressman Lincoln had returned to Washington to attend the short (or lame-duck) session of Congress. This session met before the President (elected in November) took office on March 5, 1849 (normally, the date was March 4, but in 1849 that day was a Sunday and therefore unsuitable for the inaugural ceremonies).

The local Democrats were jubilant when Logan lost to Thomas L. Harris. Immediately, they crowed that Lincoln's record was unpopular with the people of central Illinois. Referring to Lincoln's so-called Spot Resolutions, which had demanded that President Polk point out the specific spot of allegedly American soil on which American blood had been shed to initiate the Mexican War, the *Illinois State Register* claimed that the "spot" was at last "wiped out." "When Lincoln was elected," said the Democratic newspaper, "he made no declaration of principles in regard to the war before the people, as he himself tells us in his first speech in Congress. Therefore the people of the seventh Congressional district are not responsible for the anti-war speeches and anti-war votes" of their Whig congressman. "But," the *Register* went on, "it was otherwise in relation to Logan. He had committed himself in the legislature against the war, and his sentiments were well known to the people, — and they promptly rejected him. This proves that . . . they are patriotic, true lovers of their country."

Abraham Lincoln did not interpret the results that way, of course. Writing on August 28, 1848, to William Schouler, the editor of the Boston *Daily Atlas*, Lincoln said:

I would rather not be put upon explaining how Logan was defeated in my district. In the first place I have no particulars from there, my friends, supposing I am on the road home, not having written me. Whether there was a full turn out of the voters I have as yet not learned. The most I can now say is that a good many Whigs, without good cause, as I think, were unwilling to go for Logan, and some of them so wrote me before the election. On the other hand Harris was a Major of the war, and fought at Cerro Gordo, where several Whigs of the district fought with him. These two facts and their effects, I presume tell the whole story. That there is any political change against us in the district I cannot believe; because I wrote some time ago to every county of the district for an account of changes; and, in answer I got the names of four against us, eighty-three for us. I dislike to predict, but it seems to me the district must and will be found right side up again in November.

In a debunker's rush to judgment, historians have called this letter evasive and concluded that Lincoln was the cause of Logan's defeat.

"In the Seventh District," Albert Beveridge declared flatly, "Logan ran on Lincoln's record and was badly beaten." It "would have hurt Logan had he taken the stump for him at that time; for, . . . Lincoln's popularity at home had been seriously impaired, if indeed it were not for the moment destroyed." His reception when he did come to work for Taylor was, according to Beveridge, dismal:

Finally he reached home, but no mention of his arrival was made in any paper. What further part he took in the campaign in Illinois does not appear, except that at one meeting in a small town in Sangamon County, just before the Presidential election, the crowd was unfriendly and a Democratic speaker handled him roughly. As we have seen, Logan had been overwhelmed in the August elections. The result of Lincoln's first session in Congress had been a political revolution among his constituents, and, . . . he returned to Washington a dispirited man.

The atmosphere of rejection and isolation which Beveridge conjured up by saying that Lincoln's arrival went unnoticed, that only one recorded speech was made (and that in a

"small" town), and that Lincoln was "a dispirited man" became even more pronounced in Donald W. Riddle's *Congressman Abraham Lincoln* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1957). He called the election "the ultimate repudiation of Lincoln's stand on the Mexican War—not by Democrats only, as might have been expected, but by Whigs." Although Riddle noted that Lincoln made many speeches for Taylor after his return to Illinois and the Seventh Congressional District (these had somehow escaped Beveridge's notice), he read political disaster into their reception. After giving two speeches near Springfield (in Jacksonville and Petersburg, the county seats respectively of Morgan and Menard Counties), Lincoln "beat a strategic retreat," concluding "that no good purpose was served by his continuing to speak in this part of the district." Riddle added:

What is most curious of all he made no speech in Springfield. The conclusion is inescapable. Lincoln was so unpopular in Springfield and its environs that although he was an official party spokesman it was inadvisable for him to speak there.

Lincoln left for the northern part of the district where third-party Free Soil sentiment was strong.

Why did Lincoln retreat from the Springfield area? This is Riddle's explanation:

. . . he made only two speeches in his home neighborhood. In these he was roughly handled. He spoke at Beardstown on October 19. Two days later he spoke in Jacksonville. There his platform opponent, Murray McConnel, attacked Lincoln for his war attitude, asserting that Lincoln had misrepresented his constituents. Lincoln was sufficiently stung to reply. He refused to believe that a majority of his constituents had favored the war. This was an extremely vulnerable defense, and McConnel pounced upon it: how, then, did Lincoln explain his party's defeat in the recent Congressional election? The *State Register* was informed by its Jacksonville correspondent that Lincoln was "used up" by McConnel. "Lincoln has made nothing by coming to this part of the country to make speeches," the Morgan County writer concluded.

Lincoln spoke in Petersburg, the county seat of Menard County while attending court there on October 23. This time the *State Register* claimed he was "used up" by William Ferguson. It appears that Lincoln concluded that no good purpose was served by his continuing to speak in this part of the district.

Riddle judged that Lincoln had very little clout in the north as well:

It was no encomium of his success as an Assistant Elector [that Illinois went for Cass instead of Taylor]. The vote in Putnam County [in the northern part of Lincoln's district] was despite his major argument—that slavery restriction would be furthered by electing Taylor. In view of what had occurred in Jacksonville and Petersburg Lincoln could not easily have concluded that he had won many votes for his candidate.

It should make us suspicious to find the same conclusions buttressed by the opposite evidence. Beveridge's claim that Lincoln was unpopular was based on Lincoln's delivering so few speeches for Taylor in his district. Riddle found that Lincoln did deliver many speeches in his district but concluded, if anything more tenaciously, that Lincoln was unpopular with his own constituents.

To cling to Beveridge's conclusion, then, Riddle had to do two things. First, he had to say that the speeches which newspapers reported were reported unfavorably. Second, he had to say that the unreported speeches had no political effect or the opposite political effect from that intended by Lincoln. Thus the reader learns that Lincoln was "used up" at Beardstown and Jacksonville and that he failed to stem the Free Soil tide in the north, especially in Putnam County.

The first contention is based on a hostile witness; Riddle referred to reports of speeches in Democratic newspapers. Democratic newspapers *without exception* reported that Whig speakers were "used up" by Democratic ones; Whig papers always found precisely the opposite to be the case. It was Lincoln's misfortune that only the Democratic report of his speech survived.

Riddle could still plead that he used the *only* evidence available. Such would also be his plea in the case of the speeches in the northern part of the district. There are no reports, hostile or friendly, of these speeches, so the historian must rely on the only evidence available: the results on election day as ascertained from the election statistics. The figures for the two elections are printed below:

CONGRESSIONAL (AUGUST) PRESIDENTIAL (NOVEMBER)

COUNTY	HARRIS (Dem.)	LOGAN (Whig)	CASS (Dem.)	TAYLOR (Whig)	VANBUREN (Free Soil)
Cass	656	650	724	761	11
Logan	399	417	369	465	4
Marshall	341	244	322	304	41
Mason	452	336	403	391	7
Menard	648	570	488	605	1
Morgan	1,322	1,264	1,309	1,372	139
Putnam	238	219	185	266	299
Sangamon	1,386	1,649	1,336	1,943	47
Scott	662	616	649	798	15
Tazewell	678	899	593	1,097	96
Woodford	419	231	309	166	52
	7,201	7,095	6,687	8,168	712

Lincoln did not stem the Free Soil tide in Putnam County, which went for Van Buren. However, it should be noted that all the northern counties, Putnam, Woodford, and Marshall, had the Free Soil virus, that Lincoln visited *all* of them as well as Tazewell, that Marshall and Woodford went for Cass by smaller majorities than they had gone for Harris, and that Tazewell went for Taylor by a much greater majority than it had turned out for Logan. In other words, it seems only fair to say that, whereas Lincoln may not have helped much in Putnam, he certainly did not hurt anything in Tazewell, Marshall, or Woodford.

It also seems fair to apply the same test of election results to Lincoln's speeches which were reported as disasters by the Democratic press. The fullest report stemmed from the Jacksonville speech, which was reported in this way by the *Illinois State Register*:

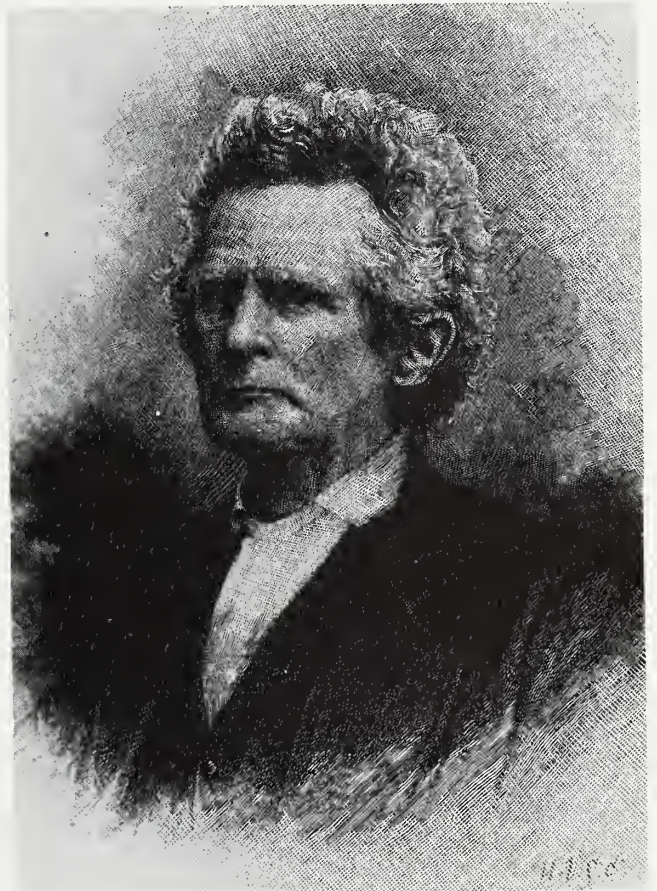
Mr. McConnel then took up a copy of the journal of the House of Representatives of Congress, of January last, and showed that Mr. Lincoln *had refused to vote for a resolution of thanks to General Taylor and his brave comrades for his and their conduct at the battle of Buena Vista, until he had first voted an amendment thereto*, that this battle was fought in a war *unconstitutionally and unnecessarily* begun by the President. He then turned to Mr. Lincoln and compared his conduct in that vote with his conduct and speeches in favor of the war, and for carrying it on with spirit and vigor before he left home and while canvassing for the office of representative in Congress. He asked if Mr. Lincoln did not know when he gave that vote that he was *misrepresenting* the wishes of the patriotic people of this district, and did he do so by the influence of Mr. Polk or some whig leader. In the midst of the shower of fire that fell around him, Lincoln cried out, "No, I did not know it, and don't believe it yet." As quick as thought McConnel pointed to the August election as an evidence that he had so misrepresented his people, and to that most foul slander upon our district was mainly owing Logan's defeat for Congress. The people were tired of having their patriotism and love of country so shamefully misrepresented by whig Congress-

man and misunderstood by the American people, and they rose in their might and cast aside the men that disregarded the wishes of those who put them in power. Lincoln crouched in silence beneath the blows that fell thick and fast around him, and his friends held down their heads in shame.

Lincoln has made nothing by coming to this part of the country to make speeches. He had better have stayed away. Riddle agreed in substance with the Democrats, though not to the extent of saying that a "shower of fire" fell around Lincoln or that he "crouched in silence."

What, though, would happen if one applied the same test to this speech that is used for Lincoln's northern tour? Jacksonville was in Morgan County. The Whigs always had factional problems in Morgan. It was the only possible challenger to Sangamon's leadership in the Seventh Congressional District, turning out only about 350 - 500 fewer votes than Sangamon's whopping 3,000 or so votes. When Harris beat Logan in August, Morgan County, which had gone for Clay over Polk in 1844, went for the Democrat by 58 votes. Lincoln visited Morgan, and it went for Taylor by 63 votes in November. It would be a *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy to say Lincoln caused the change, but it at least deserves mention and the same weight assigned to the vote in Putnam after Lincoln's appearance in that county.

Ignoring all partisan evidence from Democratic newspapers and disregarding the charges of Beveridge and Riddle, one could draw a very different picture of Lincoln's relation-



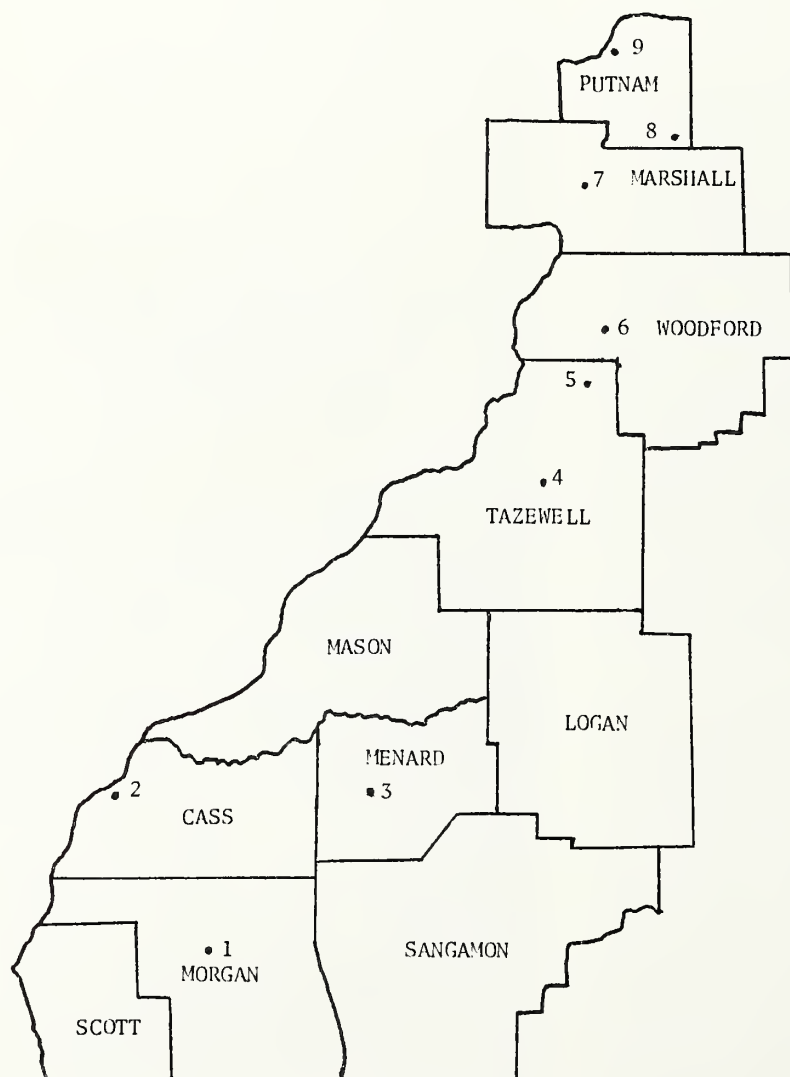
From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

Stephen T. Logan was, according to William Herndon, "small—short—thin—and squarely put up and angularly built, running in figure and features to sharp keen points, lance like . . . He is frailly built—a froth network—nervous—quick—uneasy—restless . . . his voice is sharp and shrill—'squeaky & squeaky.'"

ship with his constituents. Stephen T. Logan lost the congressional election in August to war hero Thomas L. Harris. Thinking him on his way after Congress recessed on the 14th, local Whigs chose incumbent Congressman Abraham Lincoln on August 27 as Assistant Elector to make speeches in November for Zachary Taylor. Lincoln chose to work for the national campaign first and then came home in October to help out the Taylor cause in his own district. He made about eight speeches in Taylor's behalf in the district. Every county except Woodford that Lincoln visited turned out more Whig voters for Taylor than it had for Logan three months earlier. This is not necessarily proof of Lincoln's prowess as a campaigner, but it is proof of his political acumen. He had predicted in August that the upset of Logan by Harris did not indicate any permanent reversal of political fortunes for the

Seventh District's Whig majority. He knew and stated flatly that the district would be found in Taylor's column in November. What role his own speaking efforts played in this is impossible to determine, but they could hardly have been a detriment.

It is even harder to say what role Lincoln's reputation played in Logan's defeat than to say what role his presence and political activity played in Taylor's victory in the Seventh Congressional District. All that can be said, within the confines of *Lincoln Lore's* limited pages, is that there is no indication that Lincoln's physical presence in the district had any dampening effect on Whig political fortunes in October or November, 1848. One must wonder, then, how Lincoln could have been more dangerous to Whig success just three months earlier while he was hundreds of miles away in Washington.



THE SEVENTH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Lincoln Campaign Speeches for Taylor, October, 1848

1. Jacksonville (MORGAN)
2. Beardstown (CASS)
3. Petersburg (MENARD)
4. Tremont (TAZEWELL)
5. Washington (TAZEWELL)
6. Metamora (WOODFORD)
7. Lacon (MARSHALL)
8. Magnolia (PUTNAM)
9. Hennepin (PUTNAM)



Lincoln Lore

February, 1977

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Number 1668

Some Curiosities of a Congressional Career

Abraham Lincoln's brief career as a member of Congress remains a poorly understood chapter of his life. The fundamental problem is one of documentation. Lincoln apparently did not save his papers from his stay in Congress. Other than fragments and drafts for speeches, most of the letters and documents for this two-year period are in institutional collections other than the Robert Todd Lincoln Collection at the Library of Congress or still in private hands of collectors or of lucky descendants of recipients of letters from Congressman Lincoln. The record is therefore sketchy and imperfect, and the student lacks any feel for the kind of mail Lincoln got from his friends, advisors, and constituents. Even less is known about his Washington life, where there was less necessity for exchanging letters and conversation sufficed to get business done.

Donald W. Riddle wrote a solid monograph on the subject twenty years ago (*Congressman Abraham Lincoln* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1957]). However, Professor Riddle was preoccupied with the notion that Lincoln's career in Congress nearly ruined him politically because of his opposition to the Mexican War. He concluded, therefore, that Lincoln was as yet only a follower and not a leader, and that Lincoln achieved greatness only after 1854. Coupled with William Herndon's earlier assertions along the same lines, Riddle's book helped kill interest in this part of Lincoln's life. No writer could see room for another full-scale book on the subject, and there seemed to be little to learn about Lincoln's later career from this rather sour and lackluster episode.

Opposition to the war in Viet Nam revived interest in Lincoln's opposition to the Mexican War. Early mani-

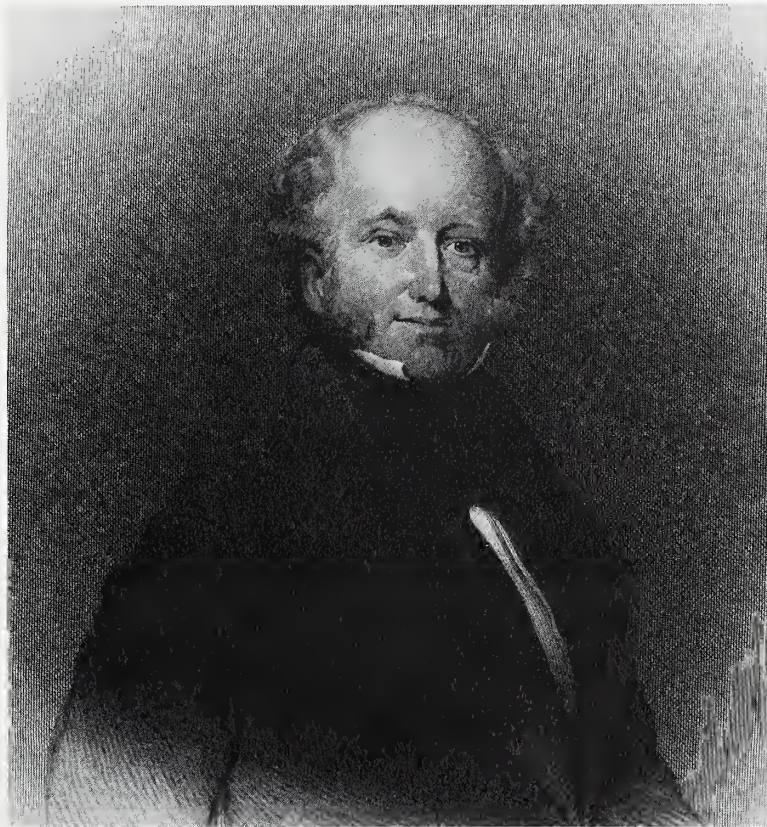
festations of this (like the play, *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail*) were superficial and tended to be mostly cases of special pleading for modern political causes. But G. S. Boritt's, "A Question of Political Suicide: Lincoln's Opposition to the Mexican War" (*Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, LXVII [February, 1974], 79-100), served to reopen serious debate over the success of Lincoln's term in Congress. It also suggested that in political "pragmatism" and "the politics of morality," there were clear links with the later statesman's career.

Scholars are not as sure that they clearly understand the story of Lincoln's term in the House of Representatives as they used to be, and incidents in that career once again look interesting and seem to demand new explanations. The fol-

lowing are three curious events which have not been explained by the existing literature and which seem to call for more exploration by Lincoln students.

I. Lincoln Discredits a Candidate for Opposing War

In 1840, Lincoln actively supported William Henry Harrison's bid for the Presidency against Martin Van Buren. Lincoln was serving his last term in the Illinois House, and his law partner John T. Stuart was in Washington, serving a term in the House of Representatives. On January 20, Lincoln wrote Stuart asking that he "send . . . every thing you think will be a good 'war-club.'" He asked specifically for "as many copies of the life of Harrison" as Stuart could spare. He added: "Be verry sure to procure and send me the Senate Journal of New York of September 1814. I have a newspaper article which



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

FIGURE 1. Martin Van Buren (1782-1862) lived long enough to witness Lincoln's Presidency. Among the surviving former Presidents (Van Buren, Pierce, and Buchanan), he had the highest regard for Lincoln.

says that that document proves that Van Buren voted against raising troops in the last war." He was still hunting for the right evidence in April, when he wrote Richard F. Barrett, absent from Illinois on business in New York, "I would be glad if you could . . . procure the Journal of the New York Senate for the fall session of 1812." A newspaper report of a political speech Lincoln gave in May indicates that he had found what he desired and was using it to good effect: "He then reviewed the political course of Mr. Van Buren, and especially . . . his Janus-faced policy in relation to the war. In this part of his speech Mr. Lincoln was particularly felicitous, and the frequent and spontaneous bursts of applause from the People, gave evidence that their hearts were with him."

Although Lincoln was seeking "war-clubs," at least two things are notable about his search. First, he searched diligently enough to enable us to call his enterprise "research." He found a reference in a newspaper, but he apparently did not use it without verifying it. For reasons which will be explained shortly, that reference certainly proved to be erroneous, and Lincoln then sought another reference which might suggest the same issue. He went to some trouble to procure the references, which were not available in book-starved Illinois (even the capital of Illinois failed to hold copies of the records of the debates in the New York Legislature and the New York constitutional convention, held less than twenty years previously!). Second, he not only worked carefully and hard, but he was also careful to keep his "war-clubs" within the bounds of truth. Lincoln began by thinking Van Buren had voted against raising troops for the War of 1812. In the end, he apparently accused Van Buren only of a "Janus-faced policy in relation to the war."

Lincoln thus molded his accusations in accordance with the historical record. Martin Van Buren had been a first-term state senator in New York in 1812. That was not only a Presidential election year but also the year a war started, and in that combination there lay trouble for young Van Buren. In politics, he was a Jeffersonian Republican, and the War of 1812 was a Republican war, opposed principally by members of the Federalist party. In New York, however, the Republicans were badly split into two factions, one of which was led by DeWitt Clinton and the other, by local followers of the Republican President, James Madison. Madison ran for reelection in 1812. Clinton was an aspirant to the Presidency in 1812, also, and he became, therefore, an opponent of Madison's war.

In New York, Presidential electors were still chosen by the state legislature rather than by direct vote of the people. Van Buren, who was at this time a member of the Clinton faction, faced as his first legislative duty a special session to choose New York's electors. And he faced a miserable choice between his local party leader (in a vote that would be called a repudiation of the President's declaration of war on Britain) and his national party head, who was the bitter personal rival of the local party head. Van Buren immediately assumed a leadership role and engineered an electoral delegation pledged completely to Clinton. When he wrote his autobiography many years later, he admitted that it was a mistake. It gave him a reputation as an opponent of the war, a reputation which he fought ever after.

The reputation was, apparently, unmerited. As soon as Van Buren broke with Clinton in February, 1813, he wrote a scorching defense of the war, calling its opponents "puny politicians" who thought the voters "accessible" through their "fears . . . and pockets." He compared them to Tories.

What has all this to do with Lincoln's term in Congress? The Democrats in 1848 would do just what the Republicans did in 1813; Whigs became Tories, traitors, and "blue-light Federalists" (so named for the lights along the coast that shone from Federalist homes to direct the British fleet ashore). It is often assumed that Lincoln was somehow *naïve* in his opposition to the war, that he had no idea what kind of trouble he could be getting into as he docilely followed the lead of the Eastern Whigs. Surely this cannot be so. Lincoln went into the fray with his eyes wide open, as the expression goes; he knew exactly how dangerous any kind of opposition to a country's wars could be to any political career. He knew that politicians would scan his record for votes against the soldiers of the fatherland. Whatever the merit of his stand and whatever the

consequences, Lincoln's opposition to the Mexican War was not entirely the awkward first steps of a neophyte.

II. Veteran Whigs Who Were Also "Mexican" Whigs

Democrats called the Whigs "Mexican" Whigs for giving "aid and comfort" to the enemy (President Polk himself used that language suggestive of the Constitution's definition of treason; his followers often simply call Whigs "traitors"). Lincoln explained the Whig party's stand to his puzzled law partner, William Herndon, this way:

The locos are untiring in their effort to make the impression that all who vote supplies, or take part in the war, do, of necessity, approve the Presidents conduct in the beginning of it; but the whigs have, from the beginning, made and kept the distinction between the two. In the very first act, nearly all the whigs voted *against* the preamble declaring that war existed by the act of Mexico, and yet nearly all of them voted *for* the supplies. As to the whig men who have participated in the war, so far as they have spoken to my hearing, they do not hesitate to denounce, as unjust, the Presidents conduct in the beginning of the war. They do not suppose that such denunciation, is dictated by undying hatred to them . . . There are two such whigs on this floor, Col. Haskell, and Major Gaines. The former, fought as a Col. by the side of Col. Baker at Cerro Gordo, and stands side by side with me, in the vote [on the Ashmun amendment, declaring the war "unconstitutional and unnecessary"], that you seem to be dissatisfied with. The latter, the history of whose capture with Cassius Clay, you well know, had not arrived here when that vote was given; but as I understand, he stands ready to give just such a vote, whenever an occasion shall present. Baker too, who is now here, says the truth is undoubtedly that way, and whenever he shall speak out, he will say so. Col. Donaphin [*sic*] too, the favourite whig of Missouri, and who over ran all Northern Mexico, on his return home in a public speech at St. Louis, condemned the administration in relation to the war as I remember. G. T. M. Davis, who has been through almost the whole war, declares in favour of Mr. Clay, from which I infer that he adopts the sentiments of Mr. Clay, generally at least. On the other hand, I have heard of but one whig, who has been to the war, attempting to justify the President's conduct. That one is Capt. Bishop, editor of the Charleston Courier, and a very clever fellow.

A month and a half later, he used the same argument on Usher F. Linder.

Again, one must be impressed by the Congressman's diligent research. This is an imposing list of Whig veterans, one which cannot be found even in the most recent literature on the subject. Yet again, there is a matter of factual accuracy involved — were these men truly as critical of the war (a war of conquest entered upon to gain votes was Lincoln's description of it) as Congressman Lincoln? Acquaintance with the newspapers of the period will certainly prompt this question, for many Democratic papers claimed that Whig Alexander W. Doniphan had come home from his campaign and criticized the Whig party for stabbing his enterprise in the back.

Unfortunately, most of the books and articles which discuss Colonel Doniphan's dazzling campaign in New Mexico focus on the military exploits and ignore the Colonel's political views altogether. Doniphan was a Whig; he was nominated by a Missouri Whig convention for Governor in 1852, but declined to run. In 1855, he was a member of a pro-slavery convention that met in Lexington, Missouri, to condemn the "abolitionizing" of neighboring Kansas. Therefore, one can assume that he did not oppose the Mexican War on the grounds that it was a conspiracy to expand the empire of the Slave Power. Where did he stand?

The truth is elusive, and more pursuit of it is called for. The only readily available source which discusses what was said at the triumphal reception of Doniphan in St. Louis in the summer of 1847 is William Nisbet Chamber's *Old Bullion Benton: Senator from the New West* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1956). Senator Thomas Hart Benton was politicking as usual and gave the main welcoming address to the returning war heroes. Doniphan responded that "if the honorable senator's plans

had been adopted, the war would have terminated long ago."

From his response, one may reasonably conclude that Colonel Doniphan's views on the war were similar to Thomas Hart Benton's. Benton was a Democrat, but this does not by any means imply that Lincoln was wrong about Doniphan's views of the war. For Benton was a Democrat with a difference, a strongly idiosyncratic personality with a will of his own.

Thomas Hart Benton, like most Democrats, was an expansionist. He wanted to acquire upper California (especially the Bay of San Francisco) and New Mexico — by purchase. President Polk noted the Missouri Senator's "decided aversion to a war with Mexico if it could be avoided consistently with the honor of the country." In a private meeting with Polk a few hours before his declaration of war, Benton said that he would "vote men and money for defence of our territory" but was "not prepared to make aggressive war on Mexico," that he "disapproved the marching of the army from Corpus Christi to the left bank of the [Rio Grande] Del Norte," and that he "did not think the territory of the U. S. extended" beyond the Nueces. Benton kept an active interest in various proposals for peace, but he also cooperated with the war effort until Polk had Benton's son-in-law John C. Frémont court-martialed in 1848. Before Winfield Scott's invasion of Vera Cruz, Benton advocated an invasion of central Mexico as the only way to end the war quickly (characteristically, he proposed not only a strategy but also a commander to instrument it, "Lieutenant General" Thomas Hart Benton). Polk later adopted the strategy, in part, but not the commander.

Benton thus meant different things to different people. For some, he was a critic of the origins of the war who held *more* extreme views than Abraham Lincoln himself, who argued only that the Texas boundary lay between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. He was a man who sought compromise peace proposals. For others, he was an advocate of an even more efficient military prosecution of the war. When Colonel Doniphan said that Benton's plan would have ended the war sooner, it is not clear what he meant, for he was both a Whig and an efficient and aggressive soldier.

III. Why Did Lincoln Frank a Democratic Speech?

On May 3, 1848, Congressman Lincoln wrote a Washington printer, John T. Towers, to ask him to "send to the folding room . . . three hundred copies" of "the speech of Mr. Wick, of Indiana." Lincoln was not yet working for the national party's Taylor campaign committee, as he would after Congress adjourned in August, and it must be assumed that he intended the speech for consumption by his own constituents in Illinois.

William W. Wick was a Democratic Congressman from Indianapolis. It is always somewhat tricky to explain the uses of printed copies of speeches made by the opposition party. During the Mexican War, Whigs frequently circulated the speeches of Democrats John C. Calhoun and Thomas Hart Benton as proof that even some Democrats disapproved of the origin, purpose, and conduct of the Mexican War. At times, parties circulate opposition speeches which they think are so outrageous in content that they will turn voters away from the opposition. The most famous instance of this practice was the circulation of Andrew Jackson's message accompanying his veto of the bill to recharter the Second Bank of the United States. Nicholas Biddle, the President of the Bank, thought Jackson's sentiments so inflammatory that they would turn the public against him. However, the message had the opposite effect, increased Jackson's popularity, and caused Henry Clay to advise Biddle to cease helping the opposition by circulating their literature.

Wick's speech does not clearly fit either use, and it will take more work to prove precisely what Lincoln saw of merit in the speech. Wick's remarks were prompted by a sensational event in Washington, D.C., an abolitionist attempt to kidnap 78 slaves. On the morning of April 17, 1848, Captain Daniel Drayton, a sea captain of the *Pearl* and an abolitionist, weighed anchor and went to sea with slaves aboard stolen from the Washington community (including slaves from Dolly Madison's house). It was becalmed and overtaken by a

navy ship which brought the *Pearl* back. Drayton and his mate were arrested for kidnaping, and the slaves were eventually sold further south where escape was more difficult. Gamaliel Bailey had recently established an antislavery newspaper in Washington, the *National Era*, and mobs soon formed which threatened to hang Drayton and his mate and destroy the presses of Bailey's newspaper. Joshua Giddings, the antislavery Congressman from Ohio's Western Reserve district, defied the mob and went to the jail (along with Hannibal Hamlin, a young antislavery man from Maine) to offer his legal services to the prisoners. On April 20, John P. Hale and John G. Palfrey introduced resolutions in the Senate and House, respectively, to investigate police protection from mobs in the District of Columbia and to denounce threats made against Giddings, who had received several assassination notes under the door of his boarding house, and against Bailey. Five days of acrimonious debate followed.

On April 24, Wick gave his speech. It was humorous and moderate in tone, but it offered little solace to antislavery men in general or to Joshua Giddings in particular. He claimed that Giddings's "forced popularity at home, hot-housed into a long continuance by a former expulsion from this Hall, as just as it was impolitic," was waning, and "he must have a new inventory of martyrdoms to lay before his most respectable, though somewhat peculiar constituency." Wick opposed the resolution because the American interpretation of government privilege extended only to "menaces . . . aimed at, or caused by, any specific words spoken in discussion here" or at or by "any act of official duty." "If a member of Congress gets into a personal scrape when cruising on his own hook about the purlieu of Washington, and beyond the precincts of the Capitol," Wick said, "he must rely on the judiciary of the District." Lincoln was no special fan of Giddings, who was not supporting Zachary Taylor for President, but one doubts that his district needed an attack on Giddings as a conscious seeker of martyrdom to persuade it to go for Taylor.

The rest of Wick's speech was a careful "synopsis of the opinions of myself, and of all (except about thirty)" of the Democrats in the House on slavery. Much condensed, this is a summary of what he said:

1. It was wrong to steal Africans for slavery and to purchase them as slaves.
2. Holding slaves by descent may or may not be wrong. Slave-holding is not in itself a sin.
3. Slavery, though introduced in violation of God's law, will be guided by Him to the "good to his creature man."
4. Congress cannot either authorize or prohibit slavery in any state or territory. Congress should regulate abuses in slavery in the District of Columbia.
5. There is no such thing as national sin, and the Western Reserve has no duty to repent of the sins of Southern slaveholders.
6. The South should gradually emancipate their slaves in such a way "as not to inundate us with their emancipates." State legislation to prevent the growth of "a numerous colored population among us" is ineffective.
7. A slave-dealer is "an unmitigated brute beast."
8. An increase in the area of slavery will not necessarily increase the number of slaves. Huddling the slave population together will accelerate the desire to emancipate but the kind of emancipation it would cause would "bring upon us in Indiana an avalanche of colored population."
9. Abolition would not decrease the competition of slave with free northern labor. "The poor fellow must be exterminated, to release the white laborer from the competition complained of."
10. Virtue and vice are equally distributed in the North and South.
11. Northern Democrats "of the Wilmot proviso and self-called anti-extension-of-the-area-of-slavery stamp" cannot convert Southern Democrats or even Western Democrats. They use the issue in their own districts to get elected, but it is harmful at the national level. You "are aggressors." Use the issue at home, if you must, but, if you must, it will be as well for you to join the abolitionists, though "we will not 'read you out'" of the party.

Wick concluded with a long denunciation of New England



FIGURE 2.
Congressman Lincoln repeatedly stressed the heroic roles played by Whig officers in the Mexican War. A typical example was the death of Henry Clay's son at Buena Vista in 1847. This N. Currier lithograph (detail) was one of many which documented that event.

Courtesy Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas

hypocrisy, elaborating on the idea that New England slave ships helped start the slavery that New England now denounced. New England rum turned African chieftans into demons who sold their own people to obtain more rum. New England guns and gunpowder were the tools by which Africans waged war and gained prisoners who became slaves. New England profited at every stage of the operation, profiting later from selling the slaves in the South, from selling the tobacco taken in exchange for the slaves, and from European manufactures bought with the tobacco. They made four profits: on guns and rum, on slaves, on tobacco, and on the manufactures.

More extreme statements of the Democratic position could be found, and Lincoln would find and use them in the 1850s, being particularly watchful for statements which denigrated the Declaration of Independence for the sake of denying the natural equality of men. Although Lincoln certainly disagreed with what Wick said in points 4 and 5 and, as a Whig, was indifferent to what he said in point 11, there were large areas of agreement as well, particularly in the views that Southerners were no less moral than Northerners and that emancipation should be gradual and should include plans for colonization.

In the summer and autumn, Lincoln would campaign for Taylor primarily in areas where Free Soil sentiment seemed strong, in Massachusetts and in the northern counties of his own Seventh Congressional District. Perhaps Wick's speech, with its clear attack on Free Soilism, had some special appeal to a mind preoccupied with this problem, but it hardly seems to provide any kind of solution that would interest Lincoln. His major concern was to keep "conscience" Whigs from bolting to the Free Soilers. This speech merely discussed the common ground of agreement between Whigs of Lincoln's type and Free Soilers; namely, that the Democratic party was not pledged in any way to stop the growth of slavery.

IV. Conclusion

There are many other aspects of Lincoln's congressional career which invite further exploration and analysis because they are unsatisfactorily explained or ignored by the existing literature. In many cases, they are fine points, but in the end they may add up to a rather different picture of Congressman Lincoln.

Researchers and manuscript dealers have been slow to realize the opportunity in this area. Although I have never seen a letter that was written to Congressman Lincoln, he received, by his own account, "more than . . . three hundred" letters in the last session of Congress alone. The glamor of the Civil War and the Presidency should not blind us to the merits of study and collecting in the area of Lincoln's formative Whig years.

Autographed Debates: The Mulligan Copy

Interested readers have helped *Lincoln Lore's* continuing series of articles on the various presentation copies of the *Political Debates Between Hon. Abraham Lincoln and Hon. Stephen A. Douglas*. By writing us to describe their own copies, they have pinned down previously unlocated copies of the book.

A case in point is the Thomas Mulligan copy. When Harry Pratt wrote "Lincoln Autographed Debates" in *Manuscripts* in 1954, he had to list the present owner as unknown and was unable "to identify a Mulligan who was a friend of Lincoln in 1860."

Mr. William Robert Coleman of San Bernardino, California, has written to let us know that he owns the Mulligan copy. Moreover, he has been able to find that Thomas Mulligan was a lawyer in Monticello, Illinois, in the 1850s. He was a Republican and introduced Lincoln when he gave a three-hour speech at Monticello on September 6, 1858. He served as an alternate delegate from Piatt County to the Illinois State Republican Convention which nominated Lincoln for President in May of 1860.

The precise nature of Lincoln's relationship with Mulligan remains unknown. Monticello was a county seat on the Eighth Judicial Circuit, but Lincoln is not known to have associated with Mulligan in arguing cases in Piatt County.

There is more to be learned about the Mulligan presentation copy, as there is with other copies of the *Debates*. If the mysteries can be solved at all, the effort will certainly be advanced by cooperation and exchange of information. Lincoln collectors and students are indebted to Mr. Coleman for revealing the whereabouts of the Mulligan copy and for reminding us of that spirit of cooperation that has made the Lincoln field a joy to work in.



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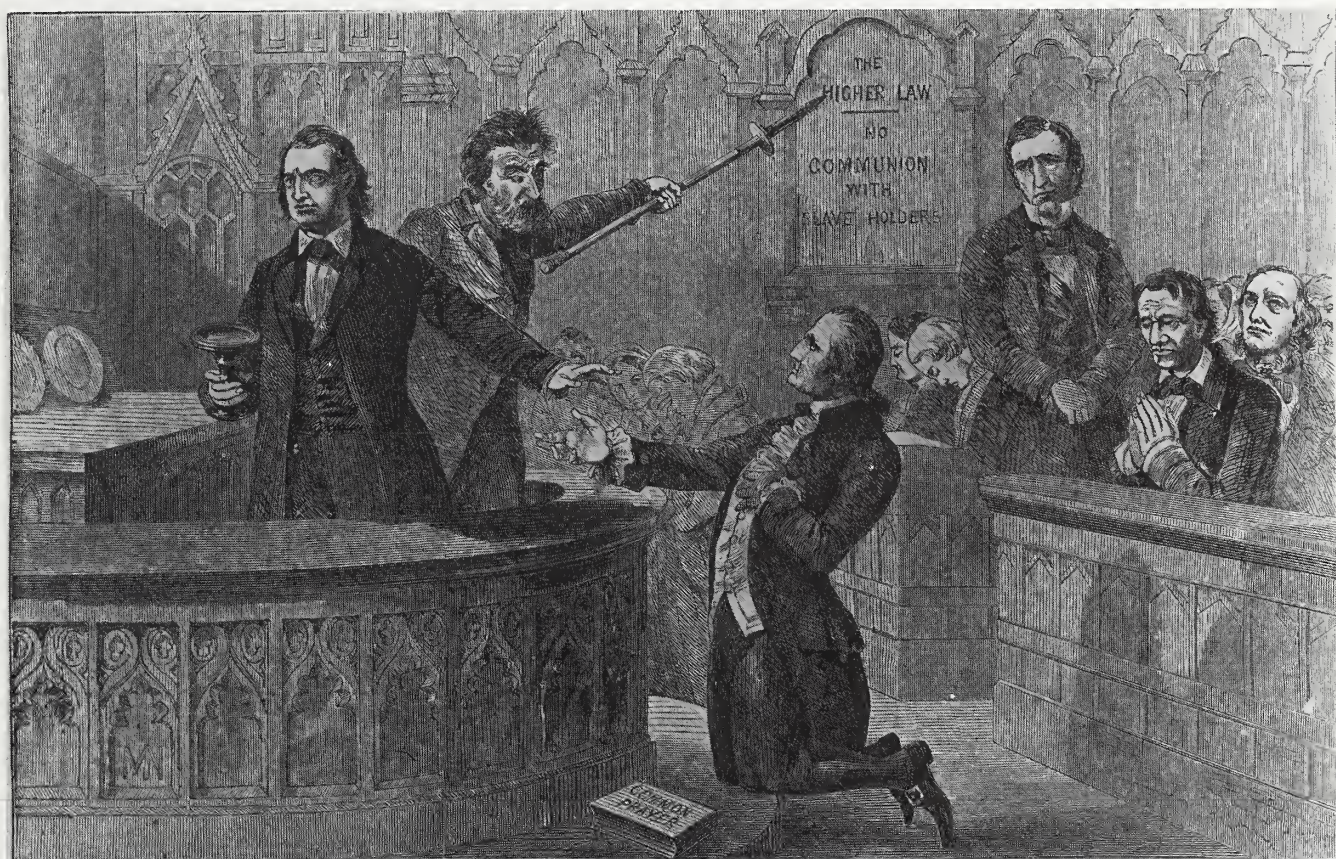
LINCOLN HISTORIOGRAPHY: NEWS AND NOTES

The best news in the field is that more Lincoln books are in the offing. Professor William Hanchett of San Diego State University has written eight chapters of a book on the assassination of President Lincoln. He has perhaps four more to write. He began the project as an extended essay on the historiography of the assassination but quickly discovered that he could not judge the historians without making up his own mind about the nature of the assassination conspiracy itself.

Thus began a long period of research in original sources, still under way. It took the efforts of his Congressman and other Washington friends to gain him access to the famed

John Wilkes Booth diary, and, says Professor Hanchett, it took practically a half hour to free the little book from the Ford's Theatre Museum security system. He has done extensive research in manuscript collections, and his book promises to be a balanced and sane corrective to the recent surfeit of sensationalist theorizing about America's first Presidential assassination.

Though we tend to think of it as primarily a European phenomenon, there is a long tradition of American politicians who have written books that were something other than memoirs of their terms in office. No one has combined



NO COMMUNION WITH SLAVEHOLDERS.

"Stand aside, you Old Sinner! WE are HOLIER than thou!"

From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

FIGURE 1. *Harper's Weekly* published this view of the secession crisis on March 2, 1861, just before President Lincoln delivered his inaugural address. The cartoon suggests that Northern self-righteousness rather than Southern intransigence was the cause of secession. Henry Ward Beecher refuses to give George Washington communion as Seward, Lincoln, and Greeley sit in the congregation in various attitudes of exaggerated piety. This was essentially the Democratic view of secession — that it was unnecessarily provoked by the sectional self-righteousness of the Republican party. To hold, as William Appleman Williams does, that Lincoln was an "imperialist" requires the same assumption that this cartoon had behind it, namely, that the South was taking the humble attitude of the supplicant like George Washington in the cartoon.

Thomas Jefferson's feat of contributing significantly to American letters with a work like *Notes on the State of Virginia*, on the one hand, and reaching the highest political office in the land, on the other. Still, Theodore Roosevelt's contributions to the history of Western America and Woodrow Wilson's scholarly contributions to political science and history should not be ignored.

The Lincoln field seems to be the last still to attract politicians as readily as historians. This tradition began with the recollections of politicians who knew Lincoln and reached great heights in the work of Indiana's Senator Albert Beveridge. This tradition is still alive. Congressman Paul Simon of Illinois, for example, wrote a book, *Lincoln's Preparation for Greatness: The Illinois Legislative Years* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), which changed our thinking on many of the points of Lincoln's early political career and improved upon the work of Beveridge. Now Representative Paul Findley of Illinois's Twentieth Congressional District is at work on a book on Lincoln's single term in the United States Congress. Lincoln's appeal, incidentally, is broad; Simon is a Democrat and Findley is a Republican.

James R. Mellon, III, moves from the field of anthropology to Lincolniana and photographic history with a promise of a work on the best photographs of Lincoln. He hopes that the book will serve a sort of "archival" purpose by presenting with the latest methods of photographic reproduction the very best print available of all the famous photographs of the Sixteenth President before they deteriorate any further. Viking Press, which recently published a book on Georgia O'Keeffe much praised for the quality of its color plates, is to be the publisher.

There has not been a motion picture about Abraham Lincoln in years. The movie industry has changed, and so has the nature of popular interest in Lincoln's career. Just now, it is probably the assassination which provokes the widest curiosity. Sunn Classic Productions, Inc., is filming "Conspiracy to Kill President Lincoln" in Savannah, Georgia, where the famed program of historic restoration has produced a city which is an ideal backdrop for a film about nineteenth-century America. The film is scheduled for release this summer. Although it does not promise to be of the sane and balanced school I championed in the first paragraph, the film will use actors of established reputation. John Anderson, who played Lincoln in a television special which preceded Hal Holbrook's lengthier portrayal, is supposed to play the Sixteenth President again. Richard Basehart, who has had a hand in a couple of television specials about Lincoln, will portray John Wilkes Booth. Sunn Classic's specialty is promotion, and they promise to give the film a big advertising campaign after this spring.

Winfred Harbison, who contributed substantial work on Lincoln and the Republican party in Indiana in the 1930s, has urged me to deal with the portrayal of Lincoln in Peter J. Parish's new one-volume synthesis, *The American Civil War* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1975). It was good advice. Professor David Donald of Harvard University has said of Parish's book that "It would be hard to find a better one-volume history of the conflict," and he should know, for Donald himself is coauthor of the best one-volume work on the period by far—at least before the appearance of Parish's work.

Parish's is certainly the most elegantly written textbook imaginable, and it is full of quotable and pithy statements about Abraham Lincoln. Parish begins his treatment of the Emancipation Proclamation by suggesting that "a man may show political skill and shun sentimentality, without necessarily being either shamelessly opportunist or morally insensitive." He calls Lincoln "the arch exponent of the indirect approach to the slavery issue, the strategy of the 'soft sell.'" Parish has a particular gift for using the evidence of witnesses of Lincoln's career to great effect, and it is important to his appreciation of Lincoln that one understand the context: "Even Horace Greeley admitted that Lincoln was well ahead of the bulk of Northern opinion, and that there was probably a majority in the North against emancipation until mid-1863." Given this state of public opinion, "He took the low road to emancipation rather than the high. It was slower and more circuitous, but it was safer and it led to the same place." Again, the well-selected witness's quotation, this time from Boston businessman John Murray Forbes in a letter to Charles Sumner, makes Lincoln's course seem shrewd:

It seems to me very important that the ground of "military necessity" should be even more squarely taken than it was on 22d September. Many of our strongest Republicans, some even of our Lincoln electors, have constitutional scruples in regard to emancipation upon any other ground. . . .

I know that you and many others would like to have it done upon higher ground, but the main thing is to have it done strongly, and to have it so backed up by public opinion that it will strike the telling blow, at the rebellion and at slavery together, which we so much need.

I buy and eat my bread made from the flour raised by the hard-working farmer; it is certainly satisfactory that in so doing I am helping the farmer clothe his children, but my motive is self-preservation, not philanthropy or justice. Let the President free the slaves upon the same principle, and so state it that the masses of our people can easily understand it.

He will thus remove constitutional scruples from some, and will draw to himself the support of a very large class who do not want to expend their brothers and sons and money for the benefit of the negro, but who will be very glad to see Northern life and treasure saved by any practical measure, even if it does incidentally an act of justice and benevolence.

Now I would not by any means disclaim the higher motives, but where so much prejudice exists, I would eat my bread to sustain my life; I would take the one short, sure method of preserving the national life, — and say little about any other motive.

Parish clinches his argument by quoting Lincoln's explanation of his policy to British antislavery leader George Thompson, as reported by Francis B. Carpenter:

Many of my strongest supporters urged *Emancipation* before I thought it indispensable, and, I may say, before I thought the country ready for it. It is my conviction that, had the proclamation been issued even six months earlier than it was, the public sentiment would not have sustained it. . . . We have seen this great revolution in public sentiment slowly but surely progressing, so that, when final action came, the opposition was not strong enough to defeat the purpose.

Parish interprets Lincoln's early policies of gradual emancipation for the Border States and his lingering interest in colonization as having an "invaluable political and propaganda purpose":

If the gradual plan failed, it might still serve to assure conservatives that all else had been tried before the resort to more drastic measures, and to persuade radicals that the administration was moving in the right direction. If the colonisation schemes failed, as they surely would, they would still serve to show the president's awareness of the fears of a Negro influx into the North, and his concern with the consequences of emancipation. Many Republicans, some more radical than Lincoln, had spoken in favour of colonisation; a correspondent of Ben Wade had applauded his support for the idea: "I believe practically it is a damn humbug. But it will take with the people."

"Lincoln," says Parish in another memorable passage, "was at his best when appearing to bow to the inevitable while doing very much what he himself wished."

Parish's treatment of the election of 1864 is a little less sure handed. As a synthesis, his book can be no better than the best of the existing literature, and this election, unlike Lincoln's racial policies, has yet to receive adequate treatment. Certainly, he is correct in saying that the "1864 election was remarkable first in that it took place at all, and second in that it so much resembled other elections held before and after." The former judgment is getting to be commonplace (which is not to say that it is not true), but the latter lacks convincing proof in *The American Civil War*. He does make at least one original point about Lincoln's opponents within the Republican party: "Those who hoped to replace Lincoln were attracted by the tried and tested formula of nominating a military hero. Their problem was that the available military men in 1864 fell into two categories: generals like Grant who were wreathed in the laurels of victory but who resolutely refused to consider nomination, and those like Fremont or Ben Butler who were willing or anxious to be asked, but whose military record was scarcely untarnished." The "boom" for Salmon P. Chase,

then, was not a response to a popular clamor — the people and the hacks wanted a general — but a drive engineered from the top down. Parish does a nice job in “translation into plain English of the full-blown phrases” of the Republican platform, pointing to the real meaning of this gaseous platitude:

Resolved, That we deem it essential to the general welfare that harmony should prevail in the National Councils, and we regard as worthy of public confidence and official trust those only who cordially indorse the principles proclaimed in these resolutions, and which should characterize the administration of the government.

In other words, translates Parish, Lincoln should behead Montgomery Blair.

Parish is on the high road to contradiction when he begins a paragraph: “The experience of 1864 bears out the view that, in American presidential elections, the struggle within the parties is often at least as important as the struggle between them.” He then concludes the same paragraph by saying that “The rivals of 1864 offered the electorate a choice and not an echo.” The fact of the matter is that most of the existing literature is written from the former viewpoint, but the latter viewpoint seems more proper in light of the nature of the party conflicts preceding the election of 1864. Attracted to the latter conclusion, Parish is nonetheless limited to the evidence for the former case — hence, his embarrassment. This is, however, an understandable blemish in an otherwise excellent book. Professor Parish lectures on American history at the University of Glasgow and joins that tradition of great British scholars who have on occasion understood American history better than the Americans themselves have.

In the course of studying Lincoln’s ideas about expansion in his term as Congressman during the Mexican War, I was led to William Appleman Williams’s book, *America Confronts a Revolutionary World: 1776-1976* (New York: William Morrow, 1976). This little volume “celebrates” the Bicentennial from the perspective of the New Left, a term which as the years fly by is becoming inapplicable but which has not yet been retired from use and replaced. Professor Williams, who is primarily a student of American foreign policy, is one of those radicals who hate liberals more than they hate conservatives. In American history, then, Professor Williams dislikes Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Delano Roosevelt and speaks, on the other hand, with a sort of nostalgic fondness of Herbert Hoover.

Williams hates Lincoln. He does not quite fall into that queer trap into which some American Marxists have fallen of admiration of the slave South because it was pre-capitalist and provided one of the very rare examples of a non-capitalist society in the United States. But he does have enough of the radical’s tendency to admire people for the enemies they make to argue that the South should have been allowed to leave in peace after — a curious concern for a radical — a convention authorized secession and “pegged” Federal property in the South at a fair price to be paid for over time (John Minor Bott’s suggestion). Lincoln thus becomes for Williams what he hates the most, an imperialist and a precursor of Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Wilson, says Williams, “would do for the world what Lincoln had done for America.” Again, in the case of World War II, “in the narrow military sense, as with Lincoln and Wilson, Roosevelt carried his crusade to a victorious conclusion.”

The Lincoln who emerges from Williams’s pages, then, is a curious figure drawn as a monolith, though the commonest conclusion of any book on Lincoln these days is that he *grew*. He is terrifyingly ambitious (“Lincoln ultimately achieved his ambition to displace Washington as the Father of the Country”), and he is pictured as “hacking out his trail to the White House.” Williams ignores Lincoln’s periods of vacillation, doubt, and uncertainty about his career (politics, law, business, surveying), about his marriage (could a “penniless” piece of “floating driftwood” support a high-minded woman in a town where people “flourished” about in carriages?), and about politics (he claimed to have been losing interest in politics between 1849 and 1854). Lincoln is also depicted as “full of missionary zeal to globalize the American solution to life.” “Put simply,” adds Williams, “the cause of the Civil War was the refusal of Lincoln and other northerners to honor the revolutionary right of self-determination — the touchstone of the American Revolution.” The House Divided speech “was the ultimate appeal to the genius of Madison: expand or die.

Hence if we keep you from expanding you will die.” Lincoln “wanted to transcend the Founding Fathers, free the slaves, and expand America’s power throughout the world.”

These are the slashing strokes of the essayist as quick portrait painter, and they have a surface plausibility rooted in the echoing of familiar phrases. By accident, some of these phrases are quite familiar. For years, I have assigned as a favorite topic for student essays a detailed analysis of Madison’s *Federalist* Paper Number 10. And for years, I have been correcting a freshman misreading of that famous document. Madison says, “Extend the sphere and you take in a greater variety of parties and interests; you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of other citizens; or if such a common motive exists, it will be more difficult for all who feel it to discover their own strength and to act in unison with each other.” He is completing a syllogism not making a statement of foreign policy. He precedes the statement with a description of the consequences of narrower boundaries (“The smaller the society . . . the more frequently will a majority be found of the same party . . .”). The point of *Federalist* Number 10 is to convince people who think the proposed United States already too large that it is in fact all the better for its great size. Certainly, the savvy Madison was not going to convince the timid and cautiously by urging a policy of greater extension of territory. Madison’s political hero was Thomas Jefferson, who, though he had a tremendous interest in expansion, in fact thought that some of the possible expanded areas (Oregon, for example) would break off to form separate republics on the American model. This may be expanding the power of the United States, but it is not expanding it at the expense of self-determination. Madison’s message was not expansion and imperialism, and neither was Lincoln’s.

This is the best example to show the real fault of Williams’s work; he reads things out of context. When he describes Seward as “a persistent and by no means wholly defeated rival for supreme power,” Williams has smuggled the Imperial Presidency of the twentieth-century United States into the nineteenth century, when the Presidency could be conceived of (as it was by Zachary Taylor and Ulysses S. Grant, for example) as an office which merely enforced the Congressional will, a sort of vice-Congress. The floundering of a feeble republic protected only by geography and still widely regarded as a dangerous “experiment” are also very different matters from the purposeful policies of a giant power.

A lively writing style on occasion masks historical imprecision, as is the case in Williams’s discussion of Texas annexation and the Mexican War:

. . . the antislavery people, along with the abolitionists, posed the specter of secession — or war — if Texas was acquired. Lincoln was not the only one who read it right. But Calhoun disdained to play Illinois games, and laid it out on the table: “It is easy to see the end . . . We must become two people.”

It is hard because of the imprecise style to tell exactly what “Lincoln . . . read it right” means here. However, not any of the possible meanings in the context can be true. Lincoln did *not* take the view of expansion that abolitionists did. He said bluntly in 1848 that he “did not believe with many of his fellow citizens that this war was originated for the purpose of extending slave territory.” He did not even perceive Texas annexation as a national problem, telling Liberty man William Sumner that “Liberty men . . . have viewed annexation as a much greater evil than I ever did.” In fact he “never was much interested in the Texas question.” This points up two things: (1) Lincoln was not a clear-eyed imperialist squinting towards United States power at all times, and (2) imperialism was not the issue in the mid-nineteenth century that it became at and after the end of the century. Lincoln’s indifference is thus the most effective answer to Williams; Williams is wrong about which side of the issue Lincoln stood on and unhistorical in his own concern about the issue. Williams’s ignorance of this period of Lincoln’s life is proven, and we need not, therefore, linger over this idle and sneering speculation:

. . . given his later maneuver around Fort Sumter, one cannot avoid the thought that he learned from Polk how to act in a way that would start a war while shifting the blame to one’s opponent. On the other hand, he may not have needed any instruction in such matters.

In the end, Williams draws a portrait of Lincoln which closely resembles the picture the opposition party drew during the Civil War. Of course, the Democrats' concern was not imperialism, but they drew Lincoln as a "ruthless" and "arrogant" (Williams's terms) potential dictator who rode roughshod over precious civil liberties. They had such disdain for him, however, that they could never respect his personality and drew quite another picture of him as a vague and wishy-washy pettifogger. Williams calls him "a Houdini with words" whose First Inaugural Address was "Hairsplitting instead of rail splitting." He was "feeble," and "he lacked the courage to take his chances."

The ultimate conclusion is that President Lincoln "steered a counterrevolutionary course." But, as Peter Parish points out, Karl Marx — who knew a revolution when he saw one — came to quite a different conclusion in a letter to Engels:

The fury with which Southerners have received Lincoln's Acts proves their importance. All Lincoln's Acts appear like the mean pettifogging conditions which one lawyer puts to his opposing lawyer. But this does not alter their historic content . . . The events over there are a world upheaval, nevertheless.

In a very different kind of book, C. Peter Ripley makes some interesting observations about Lincoln's reconstruction policies. *Slaves and Freedmen in Civil War Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977) is a scholarly monograph based on extensive research in unpublished manuscripts. It is not easy reading, but it does present an interesting picture of politics and social life in a state about which President Lincoln came to care a great deal. Ripley argues that Lincoln's policies were on the whole and, especially in the end, conservative. When General Benjamin F. Butler failed to help escaped slaves even to the extent Congress allowed before the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln endorsed his policies by tolerating them. General Butler, often pictured as a ruthless radical, emerges from Ripley's book as a rather cautious man who feared emancipation. To Salmon Chase on July 10, 1862, he wrote, "I shall treat the negro with as much tenderness as possible, but I assure you it is quite impossible to free them here and now without a San Domingo. There is no doubt that an insurrection is only prevented by our bayonets." This was no political ploy; he wrote his wife just fifteen days later, "We shall have a negro insurrection here I fancy." The man who invented the idea of "contraband" as a cloak for escaping slavery came to discourage runaways from entering his lines. He welcomed only fugitives who could work; he paid these rations but no wages, even though Congress had authorized payment of wages. He did not give rations to runaways outside his lines, though that also was legal. He allowed masters who took the loyalty oath to retrieve their escaped property.

Later, in late 1863, Lincoln pulled the rug from under the state's radical movement and supported a moderate-conservative faction, even though he had given the radicals support earlier in the year. Finding the reason for Lincoln's actions is complicated by the identification of the radical faction with the Treasury Department and Salmon P. Chase, who was emerging as a rival for the Presidential nomination in the fall of 1863. Ripley avoids speculation about Lincoln's motives and usually opts for describing the effects of Lincoln's action or inaction on Louisiana politics. This is a bit disappointing from the perspective of the Lincoln field and makes it unfair to draw a conclusion about his motive after all (that he was conservative). Still, the Louisiana side of the administration's problems is interesting and enriches our understanding of the context in which President Lincoln operated.

Another interesting look at the context of Lincoln's actions from the perspective of a single state and, in this case, a single party is Eric J. Cardinal's article, "The Ohio Democracy and the Crisis of Disunion, 1860-1861," *Ohio History*, LXXXVI (Winter, 1977), 19-40. Cardinal attempts to resurrect the reputation of the Democratic party. The party "lost" the war as much as the South did, for its ideal was the restoration of the Union, "the Federal Union as it was forty years ago," in the words of Clement Vallandigham. Lincoln's historical reputation has been good enough to hurt that of anyone who opposed him, and the Democrats did. And, "the racism inherent in the Democratic ideology has made it morally unattractive to modern scholars."

Cardinal argues that the Democrats should be awarded at least the virtue of consistency. As "the shattering events which accompanied the election of Lincoln pushed the United States over the precipice of sectional bitterness into civil war, the northern Democracy — more than any other political group — stood unwaveringly for the preservation of the Union . . . They recognized neither the right of secession nor that of coercion, and this remained the heart of their problem throughout the war. Moreover, northern Democrats first articulated positions concerning secession and civil war during this early period which, with few modifications, they maintained throughout the conflict."

Posing as the only true and steady advocates of Union, the Democracy claimed no responsibility for war and blamed Southern disunionists and Northern Republicans — not in that order. In fact, their persistence in blaming the Republicans in wartime for the war came to look a lot like treason to Republicans. Partisanship fed their belief that agitation of the slavery question rather than the peculiar institution itself caused the country's problems. Their answer to the crisis was compromise rather than coercion. Despite strong identification with and support of Douglas before the election, the Democracy united quickly on the idea of compromise with a South which had walked out on Douglas at the recent Charleston convention. The party's cohesion, as seen in votes in the Ohio legislature on key roll calls dealing with the national crisis, was much higher than that of the Republicans. Sumter brought immediate support for the Northern war effort, but "Democrats quickly made it clear that they supported the war effort expressly to restore the Federal Union; not to abolish slavery." Cardinal concludes carefully, "Democratic support for the war at its outset, then, may be characterized as willing, but conditional."

Cardinal is at work on a dissertation examining the experience of the Ohio Democracy throughout the war years. We all look forward to the completion of the project. There is much to be learned about the Democratic party in this period.

Harold Holzer continues to contribute his interesting pieces for Lincoln collectors. *Americana*, V (March, 1977), contains an article which pleads a believable case for "Collecting Print Portraits of Abraham Lincoln." *The Antique Trader* for February 9, 1977, contains Holzer's amusing article, "What Lincoln Touched: Intimate Souvenirs of an American Life" (pages 40-45) and "A Picture's Worth . . . 'Lincoln Mailbag'" on page 47. Holzer's "Print Portraits of a Martyr, Lincoln in Death: Bigger Than Life" appears in *Hobbies*, LXXXII (April, 1977).

American Heritage, XXVIII (February, 1977), contains a brief spread on actors' portrayals of Lincoln, called "Say, who's that tall, homely feller in the stovepipe hat?" There is a solid and accurate chapter on Lincoln by John A. Carpenter in *Power and the Presidency* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976).



FROM THE LINCOLN NATIONAL LIFE FOUNDATION

FIGURE 2. Frank Leslie's *Illustrated Newspaper* stressed the differences within the Democratic party in this cartoon published on October 1, 1864. George McClellan, the Democratic nominee for President, refuses to drive the miserable one-horse shay rigged up by Clement Vallandigham and the peace wing of the party.



Lincoln Lore

November, 1977

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Number 1677

Nathaniel W. Stephenson and the Progressive Lincoln

As new Lincoln books come off the presses each year, there is a tendency to shove the older biographies of Lincoln into darker and more inaccessible corners of the bookshelves. Each generation of Lincoln students has a hazier recognition than the preceding one of the contributions of early Lincoln biographers and historians. It is foolish to bemoan a process that is inevitable and, in fact, a sign that the field still thrives and produces fresh literature.

Still, there is something about the Lincoln literature which makes the field resist periodic checks of the historical pulse. About every ten years or so, a scholar writes an article to tell us what has happened in the field which deals with the Age of Jackson. No such periodic body of historiographical literature exists for Lincoln and none appears to be on the horizon. There are Paul Angle's *Shelf of Lincoln Books*, Benjamin Thomas's *Portrait for Posterity*, and Roy Basler's *Lincoln Legend*. And David Potter gave an interesting lecture at Oxford University in 1948 which discussed "The Lincoln Theme and American National Historiography." Don Fehrenbacher made a similar attempt at Oxford in 1968 with "The Changing Image of Lincoln in American Historiography." Yet, there does not seem to exist an impulse for comprehensiveness and subtlety. The reason is simple enough; the literature is so vast that it would take a large part of a lifetime to do a thorough job.

This problem is also an opportunity, however. With a literature so vast, one can find numerous works on Lincoln in almost every era. One figure, then, can provide a barometer for the spirit of every age and make comparisons easy and just. A good example is provided by the work of Nathaniel W. Stephenson in the Progressive Era.

Stephenson, as Fehrenbacher points out, was the first academic historian to write a biography of Lincoln and, at the time of Fehrenbacher's lecture (1968), one of only two academics ever to do so. The viewpoint he brought to

the Lincoln field merits study.

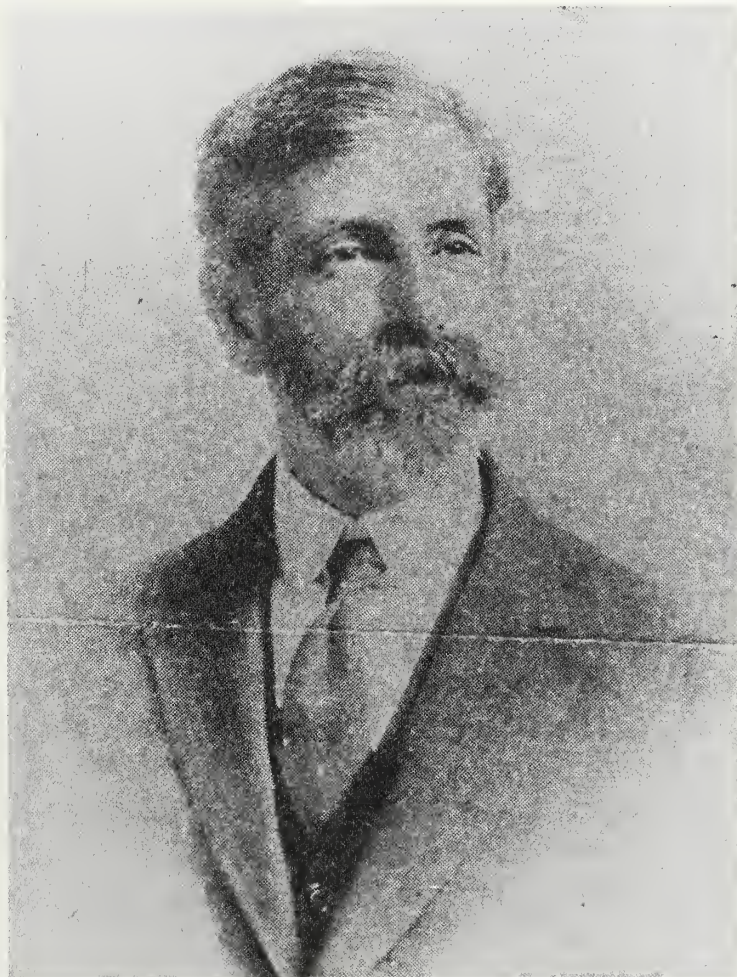
Born in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1867, Stephenson received undergraduate training at Indiana University and worked as a newspaper man. For more than twenty years, he was Professor of History at the College of Charleston. Later he taught briefly at Yale and Columbia, became editor of the *Chronicles of America* series, and ended his career at Scripps College in Claremont, California.

In the period from 1918 to 1922, Stephenson published a book on the Confederacy, two on Lincoln, and one on the Mexican War. It is this period in Stephenson's career which most interests Lincoln students, and a key to Stephenson's views can be found in an article he wrote on Lincoln in 1919, in the midst of this period of great scholarly activity.

Stephenson's "Lincoln and the Progress of Nationality in the North," published in the *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for 1919*, was a perfect epitome of the Progressive mind. The image of Lincoln presented there revealed much more about Stephenson and his era than about Lincoln and the Civil War.

Stephenson's major focus in the piece was on the impediments on the home front to Lincoln's successful prosecution of the war effort. Written in the wake of World War I, this article revealed Stephenson's preoccupation with the recent war effort. He identified "the sharply separatist impulses of four groups of people, each too conscious of its own standard type to be fully conscious of the Nation as a whole." He called them "the rhetorical visionaries represented by the [Knights of the] Golden Circle; the fanatics represented by Greeley; the parasites, represented then as now by the profiteers; [and] the labor group, whose activity was obscure and can not be typified by any one familiar figure."

Stephenson seemed less interested in the greatest impediment to nationality in Lincoln's day, the secessionists. In fact, he granted them an heroic (if anach-



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. Nathaniel W. Stephenson.

ronistic) status which he refused the enemies on the home front. It was not fair, he said, to confuse the latter "with the actual secessionists, those who flung themselves against the front of destiny, sword in hand." By contrast, the advocates of peace in the North simply "lacked character. . . . Though they seem to have intrigued with the Confederacy, and pretty certainly formed part of the inspiration of Morgan's raid through Indiana and Ohio, they were very careful, when their mood of dreamy speculation had brought them in sight of danger, to make haste to establish an alibi. Not for them the courage of the real enthusiast." Instead of the Copperhead, "Their badge ought to have been the white feather."

The Sons of Liberty lacked not only courage but also intelligence. Stephenson went to great lengths to ridicule Lincoln's enemies in the peace movement, particularly for their propensity to dote "upon that vile form of rhetoric which for certain types of visionary will always be the fulmination of Jupiter." It was impossible "to take seriously . . . men of such vague mentality" that they would swear to "this farcical oath":

I do further solemnly promise and swear that I will ever cherish the sublime lessons which the sacred emblems of our order suggest, and will so far as in me lies impart those lessons to the people of the earth, where the mystic acorn falls from its parent bough, in whose visible firmament [sic] Orion, Arcturus, and the Pleiades ride in their cold resplendent glories, where the Southern Cross dazzles the eyes of degraded humanity with its coruscations of golden light, etc.

Stephenson was inclined to interpret this opposition not as a stand on principles, however wrongheaded, but as the product of a disordered psychology. "Surely," Stephenson argued,

the more we study the event the more we tend toward this conclusion: An impediment to nationalism these men were; but their psychology and that of the real secessionists were widely different. And it is worth remembering that there was a corresponding group in the Confederacy with the same impracticable ideas, the same joy in decadent rhetoric, the same lack of genuine imagination, the same passion for riding the off-horse. The type was common to America. It would have obstructed the formation of a southern nation quite as wilfully as it aimed to obstruct the northern. And is not the type familiar still? Here is a problem of temperament, of psychological history, not of constitutional. In this place, with a paper limited to 20 minutes, the short cut to one's conclusion is all that is possible. But is it a dizzying transition to skip the intervening steps and land upon the conclusion that the orders of the white feather help us to understand the dreaming pacifists of our own day? Can we not imagine certain distinguished gentlemen, and some even more distinguished ladies, taking the oath of the Pleiades in perfect seriousness?

Not all "impediments to nationalism" were fuzzy-thinking dreamers. The war profiteers "had clearer views of life." "You remember those two documents," Stephenson said, "which figure to-day in damning juxtaposition in Volume 122 of the Official Records, — that pathetic report of the quartermaster general describing the 'troops before the enemy. . . . compelled to do picket duty in the late cold nights without overcoats, or even coats, wearing only the thin summer flannel blouses,' and along with this report, the formal protest of the committee of the Boston Board of Trade against the purchase in Europe of clothing for the Army. Even the profiteering of the World War can not beat that!" Stephenson found apt use for a passage from Lincoln's letter of June 29, 1863, to William Kellogg, "Few things are so troublesome to the government as the fierceness with which the profits of trading in cotton [sic] are sought."

The existence of the third group Stephenson attributed to the inadequate nationalization even of the North before the Civil War. These men, the likes of Horace Greeley, Wendell Phillips, John Greenleaf Whittier, the Cleveland convention which tried to run John C. Frémont against Lincoln in 1864, were antisectionists but critics of Lincoln. These "gentle dreamers" were "another obstacle to nationality, different from the moral quicksand of the secret societies, different also from the antisocial predatory consciousness of the profiteers." Stephenson dodged saying precisely what their problem was and relied on phrases like "exaggerations of individualism" and "emotional individualism gone mad" to charac-

terize them as nearly as he could.

With nationalization so obviously incomplete in the North, it was to be Lincoln's colossal task to develop American nationality. "Therefore, his views on his own role, on the function of his office, are so intensely interesting," Stephenson urged. Lincoln's view of American nationality, gleaned by Stephenson "from certain crucial events and from a relatively small number of utterances" rather than from any "general statement of his views on any of these points," retained federalism. There would be no obliteration of traditional state boundaries. "Secondly," Stephenson said, "Lincoln conceived our National Union as preeminently a people's government." "Whether we like it or not," Stephenson added, "we must see Lincoln as a statesman of the masses." Stephenson mustered a now familiar battery of quotations to make his case. In his speech in Cincinnati on February 12, 1861, Lincoln said, "the working men are the basis of all governments." In 1864, he stated with what Stephenson called "startling explicitness" that "Labor is prior to, and independent of, capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital, and deserves much the higher consideration."

These were "radical utterances," and Stephenson hastened to "qualify them by the limitations imposed by related utterances." Lincoln "excluded aristocracy from his political vision," but "he also excluded the political science of fairyland." There was, in short, nothing of inspiration for socialists in him, and Stephenson carefully balanced the "radical" quotations with this one:

The strongest bond of human sympathy, outside the family relation, should be one uniting all working people of all nations and tongues and kindreds. Nor should this lead to a war upon property or the owners of property. Property is the fruit of labor; property is desirable, is a positive good to the world. That some should be rich shows that others may become rich, and hence is just encouragement to industry and enterprise. Let not him who is houseless pull down the house of another, but let him work diligently and build one for himself, thus by example insuring that his own shall be safe from violence when built.

Only here did Stephenson mention the fourth great impediment to nationality in the North, labor. He seemed to be saying, not that labor had been assertive of its narrow demands, but that one who, like Lincoln, was sympathetic to labor could have gone too far — but did not.

Quite apart from his answers to the threats on the home front, there were other important aspects of Lincoln's nationalism which helped to lead America properly to her great national status. One was "his attitude toward the source and mode of political authority." Stephenson found Lincoln's approach to this problem analogous to his approach to labor. He was certainly a man of the people but not necessarily a slave to the people's every whim: "Lincoln was not a friend of the plebiscite or of the referendum; on the contrary, he was a staunch believer in representative government in the strict sense." Here, Stephenson found Lincoln's constitutional latitudinarianism instructive. Lincoln issued a "challenge to the country when refusing to yield to the clamor over military arrests," defended "the right of the President to assume in emergency vast authority," and explained to the people that if a President, "uses the power justly, the . . . people will probably justify him; if he abuses it, he is in their hands to be dealt with by all the modes they have reserved to themselves in the Constitution." Stephenson was not interested in the constitutional point: ". . . what is more to the point is Lincoln's refusal in various matters not involving his military authority to make any attempt to find out the popular will; likewise his frequent disregard of the nearest approach he had to a plebiscite — the opinion of the majority of the House of Representatives." Stephenson admired "the boldness with which he planted himself on the idea of delegated authority."

He refused to be the mere spokesman of the people. He was in his own mind their representative, on whom, for a time, certain powers had been bestowed. For that time these powers were his. Horribly reactionary, the Bolshevik would say. In a way, yes. So reactionary, in a way, that there does not exist, probably, as a summary of Lincoln's basal attitude toward his own electorate, a better statement of fundamental theory than that immortal letter to the electors of Bristol signed by Edmund Burke.

Finally, Lincoln's conception of the nation was notable for its sense of place. "It has been pointed out," Stephenson said, that most American reasoning about nationality is in terms of people. On this fact is grounded, I am told, a distinction between the poetry inspired in America by the World War and that of England. The American poets attach their loyalty to the group of people, their countrymen. The British poets, while having that, have also something more — a sense of the soil, a loyalty to the very earth, our mother. Lincoln in his vision of nationality had outstripped his time and had the British point of view.

As proof, Stephenson, who had excellent command of the corpus of Lincoln's writings, could cite these words from the second annual message of December, 1862: "A nation may be said to consist of its territory, its people, and its laws. The territory is the only part which is of certain durability. 'One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth forever.' It is of the first importance to duly consider, and estimate, this ever-enduring part."

It seems worthwhile to quote Stephenson at such great length, because an appreciation for the tone and texture of his writing on Lincoln is important to understand the nature of his interpretation of the Sixteenth President. Though not altogether ignored, Stephenson's place in Lincoln historiography has not received the attention it deserves. Richard Current showed an appreciation for Stephenson's work in the "Bibliographical Essay" at the end of *The Lincoln Nobody Knows*:

A couple of widely read one-volume lives are Lord Charnwood's *Abraham Lincoln* (1917) and Nathaniel W. Stephenson's *Lincoln: An Account of His Personal Life, Especially of Its Springs of Action as Revealed and Deepened by the Ordeal of War* (1922). [Benjamin] Thomas, in *Portrait for Posterity*, does not deign to discuss the Stephenson book, but [Roy P.] Basler gives it considerable attention in *The Lincoln Legend*, concluding: "Sandburg combined with Stephenson may be recognized as the best version of the private Lincoln; Charnwood, perhaps, has the best of the public Lincoln."

Basler appreciated Stephenson for his ability to capture Lincoln's "poetic" nature and for his assertion that Lincoln was no mere political opportunist but a man of stern will and inflexible purpose. David Potter in "The Lincoln Theme and American National Historiography" gave Stephenson a rather different niche in the annals of Lincoln biography:

At a time when Freudian interpretations were freely dispensed by everyone who had acquired a smattering of Freud's terminology, Nathaniel W. Stephenson garnished his *Lincoln, An Account of His Personal Life*, with psychoanalytical speculation. It must be added, in fairness, however, that Stephenson was also one of the first writers to attempt an appraisal of the meaning of Lincoln's preservation of the Union. To Stephenson, present and future developments constantly reveal new meanings in past events. Thus, Lincoln's preservation of the Union acquired new significance as the unfolding of world events revealed the increasing importance of the American republic in the history of the twentieth century. Asserting that the United States had become "the most powerful and probably the most distinctive country in the world," Stephenson suggested that

because we are what we are, the world during the next chapter of its history will be what it will be. If the result should prove unfortunate, then Lincoln's achievement was in the nature of a tragic victory. If the outcome should prove beneficent, then Lincoln's achievement is one of the greatest in history. But whatever the eventual result, the enormous significance is not to be questioned. The statesman who determined the course of American development, who guided the Republic past its turning point, is one of the prime factors of modern experience. His work contributed to establishing a new balance of power among the social forces in his country. Out of this has resulted a new balance among the social forces of the world. Although Stephenson could not foresee Hitler or Stalin, Lake Success or Hiroshima, the Truman Doctrine or the Marshall Plan, his analysis seems today [1948] more cogent than ever.

Potter came very near the mark but did not quite hit it. Certainly, nationalism was a major preoccupation in Stephen-

son's work — but why? The answer is that, like Freudianism, it was a major preoccupation of the age. In fact, if we call his age the Progressive Era, we could say that Progressivism was a form of nationalism. There are, as David Potter himself told us in "The Historian's Use of Nationalism and Vice Versa," many different kinds of nationalism. Nationalism is never really the love of the whole nation, but rather it is the love of a particular part of the nation with which the nationalist identifies. It is always a love of a particular ideal of nationhood.

Stephenson shared a particular ideal with many of the thinkers of his era, and this ideal explains the aspects of Lincoln's life he chose to emphasize. Progressivism, in its most familiar guise, wanted to see the government discipline private enterprise for the good of the whole. This preoccupation of the age led Stephenson to emphasize the impediment to nationality represented by the Boston Board of Trade. To quote Lincoln's remark about the rapaciousness of the dealers in contraband cotton does not give the same impression that stress on the administration's appointment of banker Hugh McCulloch as Secretary of Treasury would give or stress on their method of funding the war by relying on the private broker, Jay Cooke, would give. Stephenson's stress on Lincoln as a man of the people and as a man sympathetic to labor was the other side of the same coin. Progressives championed labor but not to the extent socialists did.

A bit less obvious, but still a part of the mind of the same age, was Stephenson's admiration of Lincoln's alleged scorn for plebiscites and referenda. A part of the reform movement of Stephenson's era championed such democratic processes, but the major impulse of the age ran quite the other way towards elitism. It was the first era of the expert, the heyday of the social scientist and "scientific" legislation. Experts know what the people need even when the people themselves do not, and the political ideal of the Progressive Era was a representative government, periodically checked by the people's will, and not a plebiscitarian democracy. Woodrow Wilson's views were good examples of this. He complained that Congress was "a body whose organization makes it disintegrate — only the nation in miniature." For a democrat, it would be ideal to make legislatures perfectly representative microcosms of the nation as a whole. Wilson, by contrast, was disappointed that Congress had achieved only that status. "The state," he admonished, "must have an individuality and oneness of its own which is not simply the aggregate or compromise resultant of the individualities of all concerned in its gov[ernment]." He looked for a government "formed by the concert and prevalence of commanding minds, not commanding numbers. Persuaded, not commanding, numbers." The government should command and not obey the people. Wilson was a great admirer of Edmund Burke.

Stephenson's appreciation for Lincoln's sternness and apparent willingness to arrogate wide discretionary powers to himself as President stemmed from the same ideal of government. It was doubtless reinforced by the recent experience of World War I, which had seen a stern President Wilson beleaguered by opponents of war just as Lincoln had been. Stephenson's identification with Wilson's plight is readily apparent in the contemptuous language with which Stephenson dealt with Lincoln's anti-war opposition. He pictured them as "disordered" misfits of "vague mentality," given to "decadent" rhetoric — and not unlike "the dreaming pacifists of our own day."

What makes Stephenson's work so interesting is the way in which it reveals the great assumption behind much Progressive Era thought, to wit, nationalism. Capital was criticized for pursuing its own self-interest at the expense of national strength. Labor could probably do the same thing, given the chance. Representation should not be thought of as a mere reflection of the popular will broken up into geographical constituencies and brought together again by proxy in Congress where the sum of individual wills would become the will of the whole. The nation was too organic a unity for that, and the representative, once elected, spoke and voted for the good of the whole; he did not act as the mere messenger for his constituents' narrow and peculiar interests. National unity was too perfectly organic to be divisible in parts. Stephenson was interested in "the Nation as a whole" and admired Lincoln's conception of "our Federal Union as an elaborately articulated but also an entirely interdependent community, psychologically one." Stephenson searched for the origins of

"that profound spiritual cohesion which transforms a horde into a nation."

This preoccupation with nationalism was as much an aspect of Progressivism as any impulse for any particular reform. The reforms, in fact, were supposed to make the nation strong; that was their purpose. Nationalism was Stephenson's preoccupation and it led the historian to devote an entire chapter to "The Mexican Episode" in his book, *Abraham Lincoln and the Union*, published two years later than the article analyzed here. In "Lincoln and the Progress of Nationality in the North," Stephenson had said: "... let the blind admirers of Lincoln remember that in some of the disagreements between himself and Congress — as for example the Mexican issue — it is not proved past doubting that Lincoln was right and Congress wrong." In the subsequent book, Stephenson argued "that Lincoln's course was very widely condemned as timid." He continued:

When we come to the political campaign of 1864, we shall meet Henry Winter Davis among his most relentless personal enemies. Dissatisfaction with Lincoln's Mexican policy has not been sufficiently considered in accounting for the opposition to him, inside the war party, in 1864. To it may be traced an article in the platform of the war party, adopted in June, 1864, protesting against the establishment of monarchy "in near proximity to the United States."

In the same month Maximilian entered Mexico City.

By contrast, William Frank Zornow's *Lincoln and the Party Divided*, the only book-length study of the election of 1864, does not so much as mention Mexico. Interest in flexing the national muscle in Latin America was part and parcel of the enlarged view of the role of the state so many Progressives held.

Another Lincoln biographer who was a contemporary of Stephenson's also found Lincoln's lack of interest in Mexico distressing; he was Albert Beveridge. Already at work on his important book on Lincoln, Beveridge gave Stephenson's book a favorable review — doubtless, in part, because he too was looking for the nationalist hero that Stephenson had found. In Beveridge's case, however, Lincoln's myopia in regard to Mexico was to cause a strange reversal of expectations. Beveridge found the early Lincoln more partisan than nationalist. It seemed that Lincoln did not dream of opposing the Mexican War until he went to Washington and was dazzled by the shining brilliance of the national Whig leadership, to a man, staunch opponents of the Mexican War. William Herndon's attempts to dissuade his senior partner from his course of opposition to the war served merely to prove that Herndon was almost always correct and a great driving force behind Lincoln's later greatness.

Arthur C. Cole, reviewing Stephenson's *Lincoln* for the *American Historical Review* in 1923, shrewdly noted that "the breadth and depth of Lincoln's soul come out effectively; if he becomes less the 'great Emancipator,' he becomes more the 'great Conciliator.'" Cole astutely found Stephenson "unfortunately ignoring the Mexican War stand" of Lincoln. Only thus, one might say, could Stephenson make his portrait of Lincoln a unified one. This unity fell apart in Beveridge's hands; a more thorough biographer, he knew that the Mexican War episode was not ignorable. As a result, Beveridge could not find the great conciliator, to use Cole's phrase, that he sought — or at least he could not find him in Lincoln. Rather, Stephen Douglas began to crowd Lincoln off Beveridge's canvass as he painted the great conflicts over slavery in the 1850s. A reviewer of Stephenson's *Abraham Lincoln and the Union* had noted a similar tendency in that man's work. "Mr. Stephenson," wrote a reviewer for the *Catholic World* in 1919, "correctly appreciates the great Democratic leader Douglas . . . Douglas' declaration to the copperheads should be emblazoned: 'There can be no neutrals in this war; only patriots or traitors.'"

The reviewer for the *Catholic World* noted another trait in Stephenson's writing:

With capitalists he has little sympathy whether of the Southern type which Helper's *Impending Crisis* (with which he is impressed) condemns so heartily, or of the Northern class, whom he charges with looking at the whole issue from the point of view of profits and endangered Southern trade and investments. Cameron, Belmont, Frémont and the Cincinnati ironmongers, he castigates for their shameless profiteering and their contract frauds equally with the bankers who failed to float loans save at

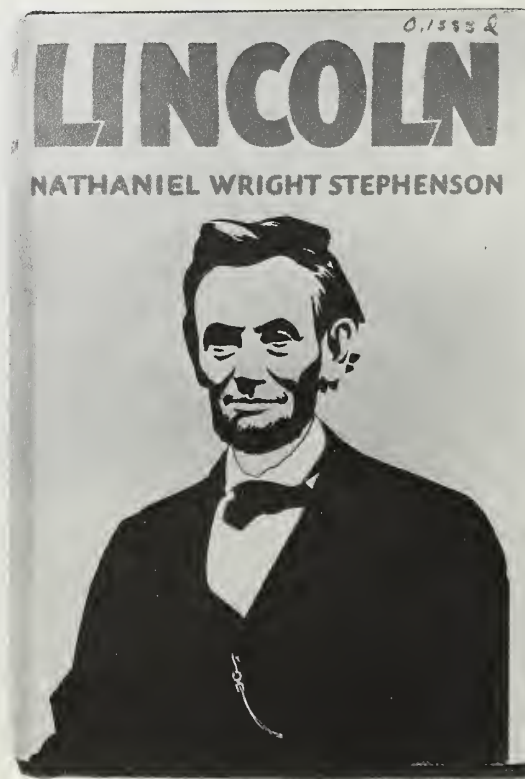
recklessly high interest and heavy discounts. There is something of the radical and a little of the iconoclast in the writer.

Beveridge would alter this Progressive strain in Lincoln writing as well. "Lincoln's whole attitude and conduct in the Bank controversy," said Beveridge, "were strongly conservative and in firm support of vested interests and the conduct of business, unmolested as far as possible, by legislative or any kind of governmental interference."

Nationalism dictated an obvious stance towards Reconstruction: any group which impeded speedy reconciliation of the States was bad. Probably Stephenson's longest-lasting legacy was his use of the term "vindictives" to describe Lincoln's enemies within the Republican party. This was new enough to provoke critical responses from more than one reviewer. *The American Historical Review* noted *Abraham Lincoln and the Union* briefly in 1920, and the reviewer said: "It seems . . . that the opponents of the President are too severely dealt with when they are labelled 'the vindictives.' The term is used cleverly and it serves to heighten the light on Lincoln, by way of contrast; but it is hardly just to men who were convinced that they were right. In the game of politics it is never safe to give all the integrity to one side and all the discredit to the other." Cole called attention to the same phenomenon in 1923 in reviewing *Lincoln: An Account of His Personal Life*:

The bulk of the volume is given over to the struggle between President Lincoln and "the Jacobin Club," as he calls the Republican "vindictives," after John Hay. It is skillfully and dramatically portrayed. One sees, perhaps, too much of the hero in Lincoln and the villain in his critics; at such times the narrative is hardly fair to the radical Republicans . . . One gets, too, the impression that Lincoln was putting all his energies into efforts to thwart the "Jacobins."

Stephenson's legacy was mixed. Some of his ideas were quickly modified by Beveridge's massive and careful work. Others had a much longer life. In any case, he did leave a legacy to Lincoln biographers, and it deserves to be understood and appreciated.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. First edition of Nathaniel W. Stephenson's *Lincoln: An Account of His Personal Life, Especially of Its Springs of Action as Revealed and Deepened by the Ordeal of War*. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1922) in dust jacket.



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LINCOLN'S THEORY OF REPRESENTATION: A SIGNIFICANT NEW LINCOLN DOCUMENT

Editor's Note: I am indebted to Mr. James T. Hickey, Curator of the Lincoln Collection at the Illinois State Historical Library in Springfield, for calling the text discussed below to my attention and for allowing *Lincoln Lore* to reproduce it. It represents a small part of the greatest new Lincoln collection made available in years, the private papers of Lincoln's son, Robert Todd Lincoln. These papers are now deposited at the Illinois State Historical Library. M.E.N., Jr.

"Please do me the favor to inform me whether the enclosed document headed 'Abraham Lincoln's Views', is in your father's handwriting," Richard Yates asked in a letter to Robert Todd Lincoln on December 16, 1909. Yates's father, also named Richard, had been the Governor of Illinois during the Civil War and a political associate of Abraham Lincoln. The elder Yates had preserved the document "for many years in an envelope containing certain letters" from Robert Todd Lincoln's father to him, and, the younger Yates added, "I have kept it since my father's death thirty-six years ago, on the supposition that it was in President Lincoln's handwriting."

Robert Todd Lincoln replied:

I am very much interested in the autograph manuscript of my father which you sent me in your letter of the 16th instant, and which I return to you.

To answer your question as to whether it is in my father's handwriting, specifically, I can answer that it undoubtedly is. While it is not dated, it is apparent that it was written when he was a candidate for election to

his one term in Congress, and it is to me exceedingly interesting as showing that even then he was filled with the thoughts of the identical questions which were the basis of his debate with Senator Douglas. There is no copy of the document among his papers, and I have taken the liberty of having a copy made for my own files; but with no intention of publishing it.

The original document owned by Yates has never been found, and Robert Todd Lincoln's typed copy remains the only version of the document available to Lincoln students. If we may trust Robert's judgment in the matter of his father's handwriting, then the text represents a previously unpublished Lincoln document of considerable significance. And surely Robert was a reliable expert on his father's handwriting. Not only did he receive letters from his father, but Robert was also for many years the "curator" of his father's Presidential papers. For four years he had been lugging seven trunks full of papers back and forth between Washington, D.C., and his summer home. He had on numerous occasions scoured them in searching for particular items that people like Richard Yates asked him about (note that he could say that there was "no copy of the document" among his father's papers).

The typed copy of the document reads thus:

A. Lincoln's view of the Right Position

In relation to the slavery question — Wilmot Proviso — Mr. Clay's compromise, and so on, I think there



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. Richard Yates (1815-1873) was Governor of Illinois during the Civil War. He met Abraham Lincoln in the 1830s, when both men were Henry Clay Whigs. He served three terms in the Illinois legislature and two in the United States House of Representatives before becoming Governor of Illinois.

is good reason for hoping that the whole will be settled before my service will commence, should I be elected—

But if elected, and, on taking my seat, this question shall still be open, and the wish of my district upon it shall be known to me, that wish shall govern me.

If, however, that wish shall not be known to me, and I shall be left to the exercise of my own judgment upon the question, I shall be governed by the then existing state of things, which may then be as different from what it now is, as it now is from what it was a year and a half or two years ago.

There are, however, some things upon which I feel that I am, and shall remain, inflexible — One of them is my opposition to the extension of slavery into territories now free — In accordance with this, I have been for the Wilmot Proviso; and I should adhere to it in Congress, so long as I should suppose such adherence, the best mode of preventing such extension of slavery; and, at the same time as not endangering, any dearer object — In this I mean to say I can conceive a case in which a dogged adherence to the Proviso by a few, might aid the extension of slavery, — that is, might fail in its direct object, defeat other restraining measures, and allow slavery to be pushed wherever nature would allow — and in such a case, should I believe it to exist, I would at once abandon the Proviso — Again, of all political objects the preservation of the Union stands number one with me; and whenever I should believe my adherence to the Proviso tended to endanger the Union, I would at once abandon it.

I have now distinctly stated the principles upon which I shall act, in relation to this question, if elected.

While on this subject I will say, I have not at any time supposed the Union to be in so much danger as some others have — I have doubted, and still doubt, whether a majority of the voters, in any Congressional District in the nation are in favor of dissolution in any event — slavery restricted, or slavery extended.

Still it is arrogant — silly perhaps — to entirely disregard the opinions of the very many great and good men who think there is real danger — With great distrust of my own ability, and reasonable deference to the opinions of the author of the late compromise bill, I somewhat regretted the defeat of that measure; and had it passed the Senate, and I been a member of the lower House I think I should have voted for it, unless my district had otherwise directed me.

The document is a good deal more difficult to interpret than Robert thought. It could not have been "written when he was a candidate for election to his one term in Congress." David Wilmot introduced his famous Proviso on the afternoon of August 8, 1846. Lincoln won election to Congress on August 3, 1846. He could not have taken a position on an issue which did not exist while he was running for Congress. Moreover, Lincoln speaks in the document of the defeat of Henry Clay's "late compromise bill." This defeat did not occur until August of 1850.

By 1850, Congressional elections in Illinois were held in November, and Lincoln's statement might very well have been written in the midst of the contest between Whig Richard Yates and Democrat Thomas L. Harris for the local district's seat in the United States House of Representatives. Harris had won Lincoln's seat in 1848, in a contest against Stephen T. Logan, a miserable campaigner. Yates reclaimed the district for the Whigs in 1850.

Lincoln's statement clearly touches on the major issues in the 1850 contest. The Democratic organ, the *Illinois State Register*, sought to embarrass the local Whigs for inconsistent stances on national issues. Yates had been a member of the Illinois General Assembly from 1848 to 1850, when the Whig members voted to instruct the United States Senators from Illinois to insist on the Wilmot Proviso, which would have barred slavery from any territory acquired as a result of the Mexican War. In the electoral contest in 1850, however, Yates apparently supported Henry Clay's compromise proposal, which would have allowed some territories gained from the Mexican War to organize as states with or without slavery, as the people in the territories should themselves determine. Democrats also accused Yates of trying to dodge the issue, it being unclear how Yates reconciled slavery's exclusion with Clay's compromise measures. Democrats accused Yates of voting for instructing Illinois's United States Senators to vote for abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia, something which Clay's compromise measures conspicuously did not urge.

The substance and tone of Lincoln's remarks certainly fit this delicate political situation. "I have been for the Wilmot

Proviso," Lincoln said, but he would "adhere to it in Congress" only as long as it did not endanger "any dearer object." He added pointedly that "of all political objects the preservation of the Union stands number one with me; and whenever I should believe my adherence to the Proviso tended to endanger the Union, I would at once abandon it." Yates could very well assume Lincoln's position on these points. Yates had been for the Wilmot Proviso, but he might change his position if a "dogged adherence" to it would endanger the Union. In light of Democratic charges that Yates was dodging, Lincoln's statement that he had "now distinctly stated the principles upon which I shall act" seems very much to the point. It is notable, too, that Lincoln did not say, as he would later in his life, that he had voted for the Wilmot Proviso many times while he served in the United States House of Representatives. Thus there is nothing in the statement which could not as well have been used by Yates as by Lincoln.

Although it is generally assumed that Lincoln's political ambitions slumbered after 1849, there is a possibility that the statement was an attempt to address the issues of 1850 in his own behalf. The reference to his personal feeling that he had "not at any time supposed the Union to be in so much danger as some others have" was characteristic of Lincoln's attitude around 1850. There is a letter marked "*Confidential*" in the Yates Papers which indicates that some people among Yates's supporters feared that Lincoln wanted to run for Congress:

[Joseph O.] King has been absent for ten days, I learn he has been sent to the upper part of the district by the Lincoln faction for the purpose of preparing the minds of the people against our wishes in this end of the district.

Look out or you will be defeated by pretended friends before the convention assembles.

You have grate confidence in [John Todd] Stuart; he may be your friend in some things, but he is for Lincoln for Congress.

Yours truly
Butler

Stuart's preference may not have been Lincoln's, however, and the fact remains that Lincoln supported Yates when he ran for Congress in 1850.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. Robert Todd Lincoln

The statement is titled "A. Lincoln's view of the Right Position" rather than "Lincoln's Position." Just two years before, Lincoln had written a similar statement for Zachary Taylor, putting words in that Presidential candidate's mouth in a similar way: "The question of a national bank is at rest; were I President I should not urge it's reiteration upon Congress." It seems likely that this later statement, too, was meant for another's use.

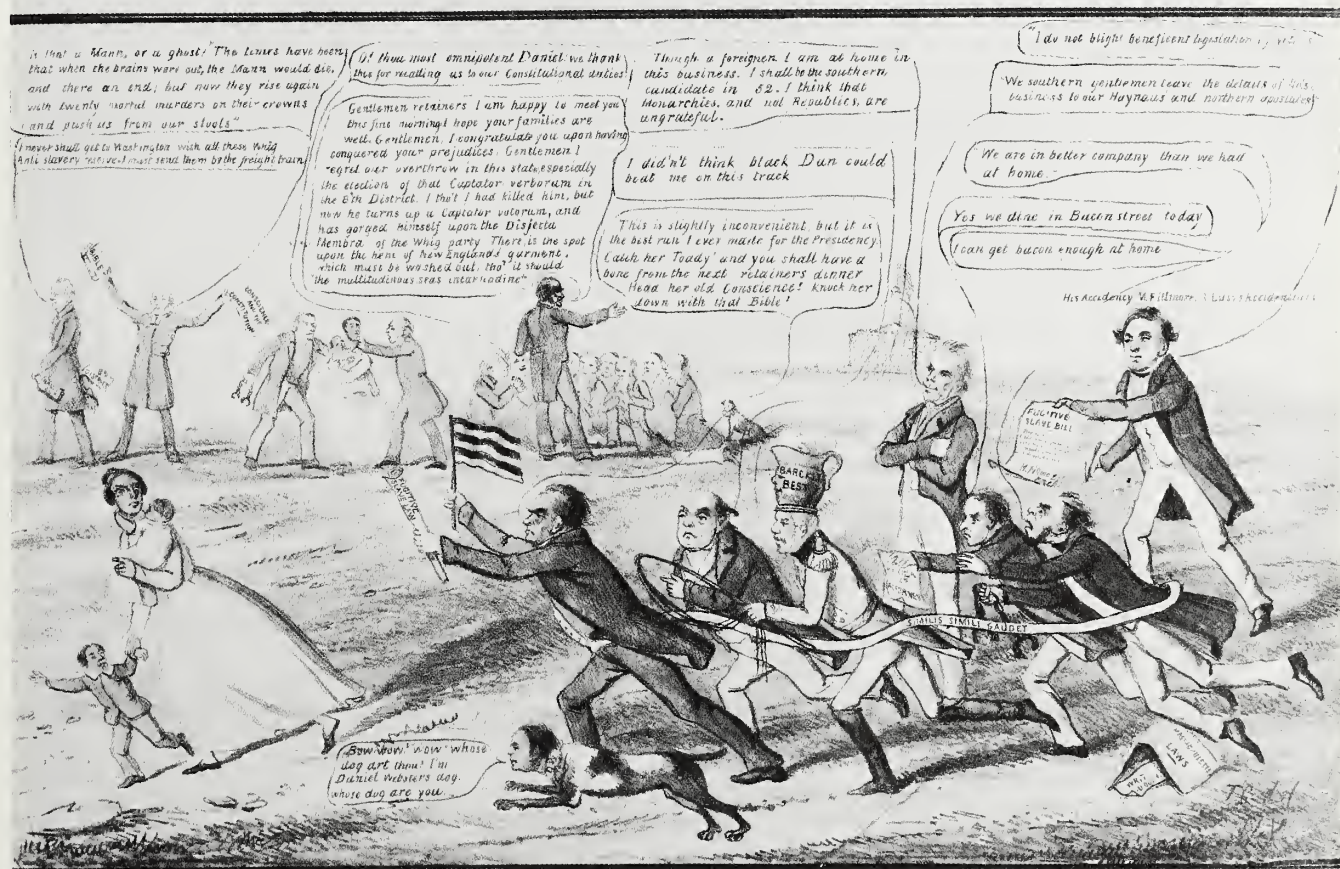
The views were, nevertheless, Lincoln's views. Some of them are of interest. For example, he speaks of slavery's being "pushed wherever nature would allow." This remark suggests the idea that climate could determine the ability of slavery to expand, an idea which Lincoln would quarrel with later in his career.

It is also remarkable to note the degree to which Lincoln adhered to the idea that representatives could be instructed how to vote by their constituents. The idea of instructed representation was not in itself an issue in 1850, but there were numerous references to Yates's having voted to instruct Senators to do what he now would not do himself. Lincoln was a staunch believer in tying the representative closely to the will of his constituents. In 1848, Lincoln called instruction "the primary, the cardinal, the one great living principle of all Democratic representative government — the principle, that the representative is bound to carry out the known will of his constituents." He recognized, however, that instruction was essentially a Democratic dogma. In 1854, he argued that if the Illinois legislature "should instruct Douglas to vote for the repeal of the Nebraska Bill, he must do it, for 'the doctrine of instructions' was a part of his political creed." "A. Lincoln's view of the Right Position" is the only document wherein Lin-

coln reveals his personal willingness to be governed strictly by "the wish of my district" on issues as important as "the slavery question — Wilmot Proviso — Mr. Clay's compromise." He may have qualified his commitment by adding that "There are, however, some things upon which I feel that I am, and shall remain, inflexible." This contradiction followed his statement that he would be governed by the circumstances of the moment, sometime hence, when he would arrive in Congress — not his statement that he would be guided by "the wish of my district" if that wish "shall be known to me." Apparently, he took the ultra-democratic ground that instruction could overrule his personal views even on "the slavery question."

The clarity with which Lincoln announced the primacy of Union in his political beliefs is also of great significance. His willingness to "abandon" the Wilmot Proviso "at once" if it "tended to endanger the Union" is somewhat at odds with later statements in which he viewed the Union as the vehicle of liberty and made it unclear whether union or freedom could be considered of prime importance.

"A Lincoln's view of the Right Position" is a short document, but one worthy of deep study. It deals with fundamental assumptions about democratic government. It might be interpreted as a sign of the survival of Lincoln's political ambition beyond a period when such ambitions were supposed to have disappeared. It is a significant addition to the body of evidence bearing on Lincoln's views on slavery, still the most important subject for study in the Lincoln field. It is safe to predict that it will be, despite its brevity, an oft-quoted and much-interpreted document.



A grand Slave hunt, or Trial of speed for the Presidency, between the celebrated dogs Black Dan, Lewis Cass, and Haynan.

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 3. The Compromise of 1850 made and destroyed many historical reputations and posed great difficulties for most antislavery Whigs. In this cartoon Daniel Webster is depicted as a slave-catcher, chasing slave women and children with a copy of the Fugitive Slave Law in his hand. The Compromise of 1850 included a tougher Fugitive Slave Law, which antislavery Whigs found hard to swallow. Those who had supported the Wilmot Proviso a mere year or two earlier were likewise embarrassed by having to accept the possibility of slavery in some of the territory acquired from Mexico.

CUMULATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY 1976-1977

by Mary Jane Hubler

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1976

(EAKINS PRESS FOUNDATION)

1976-28

An Album Of Lincoln Photographs And Words/(Portrait of Lincoln facing left)/(Cover title)/(Copyright 1976 by the Eakins Press Foundation.)

Folder, flexible boards, 5 7/8" x 4 1/4", single sheet folded seven times, (15) pp., illus., price, \$1.95.

WILEY, BELL I.

1976-29

Abraham Lincoln: A Southerner's Estimate After 110 Years/Bell I. Wiley/The Andrew W. Mellon Professor/in the Humanities, Tulane University/Fall, 1975/The/Graduate School/Tulane University/New Orleans, La., 70118/[Copyright 1976 by Tulane University. All rights reserved.]

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 9" x 5 7/8", 29 (1) pp. Autographed copy by author.

1977

BALSIGER, DAVID AND CHARLES E.**SELLIER, JR.**

1977-6

The Lincoln Conspiracy/by/David Balsiger/and/Charles E. Sellier, Jr./(Device)/Schick Sunn Classic Books/Los Angeles, California/©1977 Schick Sunn Classic Productions, Inc./All Rights Reserved/Printed in the United States of America/Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 77-73521/International Standard Book Number: 0-917214-03-X/

Book, paper, 7" x 4 1/8", 320 pp., illus., price, \$2.25.

BASLER, ROY P.

1977-7

Roy P. Basler/*President Lincoln Helps His Old Friends*/(Caption title)/(Published by the Abraham Lincoln Association, Springfield, Illinois.)

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 8 15/16" x 6 3/16", fr., fd., 16 pp.

DYBA, THOMAS J.

1977-8

The Story of/the Only Home/Abraham Lincoln/Ever Owned/(Picture of Springfield Home)/Eighth and Jackson Streets/Springfield, Illinois/1844-1861/(Cover title)/(Copyright 1977 by Thomas J. Dyba. Published by Illinois Benedictine College, Lisle, Illinois. First edition.)

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 8 3/8" x 5 1/2", (16) pp. including illustrated clear transparent pages preceding and following the text, illus.

GOLD, MARVIN

(1977)-9

John Frank of St. Charles./(Picture of John Frank at work)/Robert Hostkoetter/(Cover title)/

Folder, paper, 11" x 8 1/2", (4) pp., single sheet folded once, illus. Autographed copy by Lincoln sculptor, John Frank.

IMAI, MASAO

1977-10

(Title: Lincoln)/(Copyright 1976 by Masao Imai. Published by Bunken Publishing Company on April 1, 1977. Entire contents of book printed in Japanese language.)

Book, cloth, 8 3/4" x 6 1/4", 158 (2) pp., illus., front and back covers illustrated with scenes and caricatures

Juvenile literature.

LINCOLN MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

1977-11

Lincoln Memorial University Press/(Device)/Summer 1977/Vol. 79, No. 2/Lincoln Herald/A Magazine devoted to historical/research in the field of Lincolniana and/the Civil War, and to the promotion/of Lincoln Ideals in American/Education./[Harrogate, Tenn.]

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 10 1/8" x 7 1/8", 45-92 pp., illus., price per single issue, \$2.50.

LINCOLN MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

1977-12

Lincoln Memorial University Press/(Device)/Fall, 1977/Vol. 79, No. 3/Lincoln Herald/A Magazine devoted to historical/research in the field of Lincolniana and/the Civil War, and to the promotion/of Lincoln Ideals in American/Education./[Harrogate, Tenn.]

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 10 1/8" x 7 1/8", 93-140 pp., illus., price per single issue, \$2.50.

McGINNIS, RALPH Y.

1977-13

Quotations/from/Abraham Lincoln/Edited by/Ralph Y. McGinnis/Nelson-Hall/Chicago/[Copyright 1977 by Ralph McGinnis. All rights reserved.]

Book, cloth, 10 1/4" x 8 1/4", fr., x p., 134 pp., consecutive Brady portrait of Lincoln on front and back covers and inside front and back covers, illus., price, \$12.95.

RISVOLD, FLOYD E. AND**JOHN M. RUSSELL**

1977-14

Bulletin Of 33rd Annual Meeting/of/The Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin/held at Menomonie, Wisconsin/April 24, 1976/(Portrait of Lincoln)/Featuring remarks by/Floyd E. Risvold, Editor/of/Louis Weichmann's/A True History Of The Assassination Of/Abraham Lincoln And The Conspiracy Of 1865/and/Comments by Mr. John M. Russell concerning his play,/Black Friday, a presentation of which the Fellowship/attended in the Mabel Tainter Building at Menomonie,/Wisconsin./Historical Bulletin No. 32/1977/(Cover title)/

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 10" x 7 1/2", 16 pp., printing on inside back cover, illus., price, \$1.25. Send to Mrs. Carl Wilhelm, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 816 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.

TEJIMA, YUSUKE

1977-15

(Title: Lincoln)/(Copyright 1977. Published by Shufunotomo Co., Ltd. on December 1977. Entire contents of book printed in Japanese language.)

Book, hard boards, 8 1/2" x 6", 165 (3) pp., colored illustrations at front of book, printed illustrations in contents of book, front and back covers illustrated. Juvenile literature.

TRUMP, FRED

1977-16

Lincoln's/Little/Girl/By Fred Trump/(Scene of cabin)/Heritage Books/Salina, Kansas/[Copyright 1977 by Heritage Books. All rights reserved.]

Book, cloth, 8 3/4" x 5 1/2", 123 (5) pp., illus. Autographed copy by author.

LINCOLN NATIONAL LIFE**FOUNDATION**

1977-17

Lincoln Lore/Bulletin of The Lincoln National Life Foundation . . . Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor. Published each month/by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801./Number 1667, January 1977 to Number 1672, June 1977.

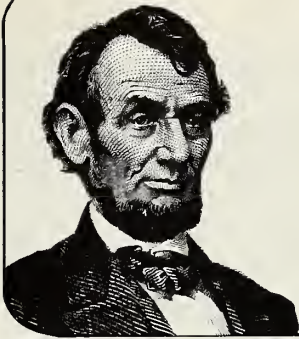
Folder, paper, 11" x 8 1/2", 4 pp., illus. Number 1667, Abraham Lincoln and the Adams Family Myth, January 1977; Number 1668, Some Curiosities of a Congressional Career, February 1977; Number 1669, The Contents of Lincoln's Pockets at Ford's Theatre, March 1977; Number 1670, *With Malice Toward None* Bears Lincoln No Malice, April 1977; Number 1671, Lincoln Historiography: News And Notes, May 1977; Number 1672, Lincoln In The Orient, June 1977.

LOUIS A. WARREN LINCOLN LIBRARY AND MUSEUM, THE

1977-18

Lincoln Lore/Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor. Published/each month by the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801./Number 1673, July 1977 to Number 1678, December 1977.

Folder, paper, 11" x 8 1/2", 4 pp., illus. Number 1673, Lincoln Autographed Debates: Samuel Long Copy, July 1977; Number 1674, France and the United States: Ernest Duvergier de Hauranne Visits Lincoln's America, August 1977; Number 1675, Two New Lincoln Sites . . . Maybe, September 1977; Number 1676, Some Sober Second Thoughts about the New Constitutional History, October 1977; Number 1677, Nathaniel W. Stephenson and the Progressive Lincoln, November 1977; Number 1678, Index for 1977, December 1977.



Lincoln Lore

November, 1979

Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor.
Mary Jane Hubler, Editorial Assistant. Published each month by the
Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

Number 1701

LINCOLN, THE MEXICAN WAR, AND SPRINGFIELD'S VETERANS

Congressman Abraham Lincoln had a theory to explain the loss of his district to the Democrats following his single term in the United States House of Representatives. It was a ticklish situation because Lincoln's old law partner, Stephen Trigg Logan, was the unsuccessful Whig candidate for Lincoln's seat. Thomas L. Harris, who had served in the Mexican War as a captain of the Fourth Illinois Regiment, was the successful Democratic candidate. When asked to explain Logan's defeat, Lincoln said:

I would rather not be put upon explaining how Logan was defeated in my district. In the first place I have no particulars from there, my friends, supposing I am on the road home, not having written me. Whether there was a full turn out of the voters I have as yet not learned. The most I can now say is that a good many Whigs, without good cause, as I think, were unwilling to go for Logan, and some of them so wrote me before the election. On the other hand Harris was a Major of the war, and fought at Cerro Gordo, where several Whigs of the district fought with him. These two facts and their effects, I presume tell the whole story. That there is any political change against us in the district I cannot believe; because I wrote some time ago to every county of the district for an account of changes; and, in answer I got the names of four against us, eighty-three for us. I dislike to predict, but it seems to me the district must and will be found right side up again in November.

Unfortunately for history, Logan's close association with Lincoln prevented the Congressman from explaining precisely why a number of Whigs were discontented with Logan's candidacy. Lincoln's gentlemanly reticence caused the loss to history forever of his explanation of Logan's failings. It also helped give rise to the story that the weight of Lincoln's record of opposition to the Mexican War caused Logan's defeat.

Even without Lincoln's explanation of Logan's lack of popularity among some Whigs, the historian has at least a partial theory of the district's surprising Democratic vote. Since the voters turned out in very large

numbers, the important part of Lincoln's theory is its stress on the Mexican War veterans' vote.

Figures for the whole district are not available, but Sangamon County's poll books for the 1848 election show how Springfield's veterans voted. Most of Springfield's veterans had served in Company A of the Fourth Illinois Regiment. Not all of the soldiers in the company were from Springfield, and not all of the Springfield men voted in the 1848 election. Nevertheless, the votes of a number of the Springfield veterans are recorded:

Captain Horatio E. Roberts (Democrat)
Second Lieutenant John S. Bradford (Democrat)
Sergeant Walter Davis (Whig)
Sergeant David Logan (Whig)
Sergeant Dudley Wickersham (Democrat)
Private Grandison Addison (Democrat)
Private John J. Balantine (Democrat)
Private William W. Brown (Democrat)
Private Zebulon P. Cabaniss (Whig)
Private John Chapman (Democrat)
Private Harvey Darnell (Whig)
Private John E. Foster (Whig)
Private George W. Funk (Whig)
Private Mathew Murray (Democrat)
Private James B. Ransdall (Whig)
Private Charles F. Watson (Whig)

Private Levi P. Watts (Democrat)
Private Thomas Whitehurst (Democrat)
Private Joseph Yeakle (Whig)

Surprisingly, nine of the soldiers voted Whig (for Logan), and nine voted for Democrat Thomas L. Harris.

A number of the 1848 voters had been discharged for various disabilities and were not veterans in the same sense most of those listed above were. Still, they had enlisted to fight and deserve to be considered as men willing to serve their country in the Mexican War. In addition to John S. Bradford, who resigned on September 16, 1846, they were:

Sergeant William W. Pease (Whig)

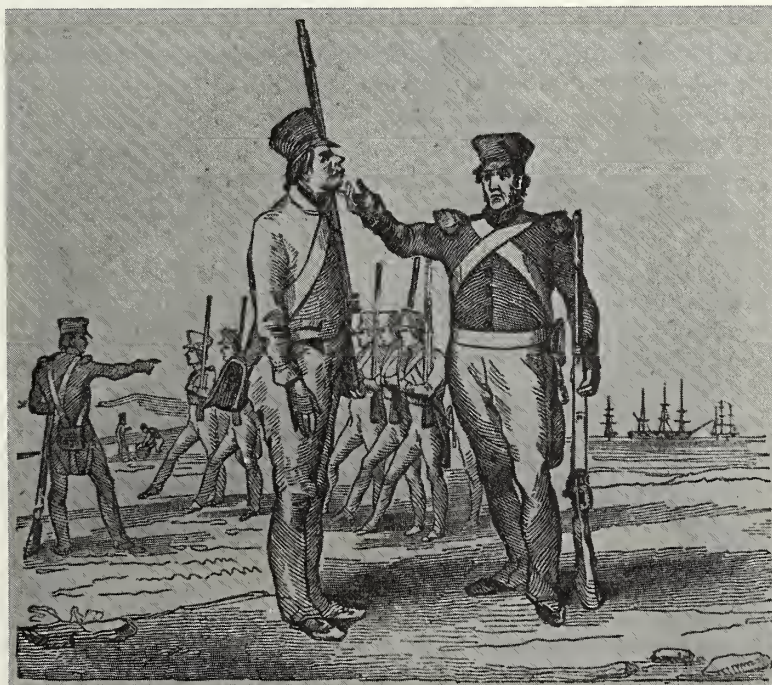


FIGURE 1. Mexican War recruits.

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

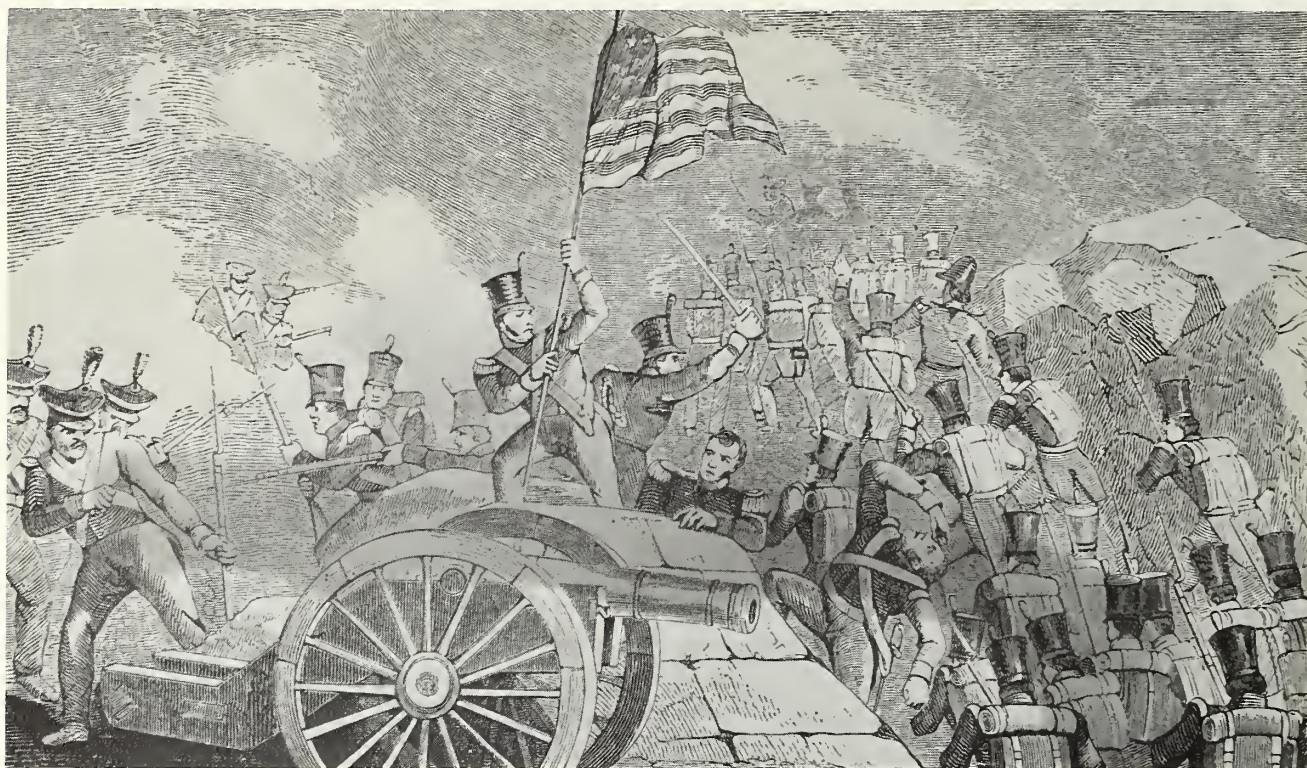


FIGURE 2. The Battle of Cerro Gordo, where Illinois's soldiers fought.

*From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum*

Private Samuel Cole (Whig)
Private Marion F. Mathews (Whig)
Private George C. Whitlock (Democrat)
Private James A. Waugh (Whig)

If these are added to the other veterans' votes, the Whigs captured the veteran vote in Springfield, 13 to 10.

A number of qualifications should be noted. Springfield was overwhelmingly Whig in politics in this period. Therefore, if Whigs and Democrats enlisted in numbers proportionate to their strength in the population at large, a Whig preponderance is to be expected. Problems in interpreting the handwriting in the poll books make the use of some of the names listed above questionable. Mathews, Foster, and Wickersham are questionable interpretations of the names listed in the poll books. Eliminate these three (two Whigs and a Democrat), and the vote stands at 11 to 9.

Even making these qualifications, one can see that Lincoln's theory—at least insofar as Springfield was concerned—was probably not correct. Whig soldiers fought in the war while Whig politicians opposed the war at home, but Whig veterans continued to sustain the Whig cause when the war was over. Could it be that some of the nine or ten Democratic votes came from men who previously voted Whig? Probably not. In the first place, companies elected their officers, and Company A had a Democrat as a captain. Probably a majority of the soldiers were Democrats. In the second place, soldiers were young men. Since the Fourth Illinois Regiment left for duty before election day in 1846, these men could have shown their political preference most recently only in 1844. A check of the 1850 census returns reveals that three of the ten soldiers listed in that census were too young to vote in 1844. They, and probably several of the others, were showing their political preference for the first time in 1848.

The most important qualification to bear in mind is that Lincoln was discussing the whole district. The impact of service in the Mexican War may have been much different among rural veterans. Nevertheless, the vote of Springfield's Mexican War veterans is interesting. These men did not turn against the Whig party because Lincoln had opposed the Mexican War, and a majority of them would happily have seen their old captain, Thomas L. Harris, go down to political defeat.



*From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum*

FIGURE 3. Edward D. Baker was a close friend and political ally of Abraham Lincoln's. He and John J. Hardin, the other strong Whig leader in Lincoln's congressional district, chose to serve in the Mexican War. Lincoln always had complete confidence that such Whig veterans shared his view that the war was unconstitutional and unnecessary.

War and Partisanship

What Lincoln Learned from James K. Polk

MARK E. NEELY, JR.

The lives of Abraham Lincoln and James Knox Polk are proof that the American frontier shaped its sons in different ways. Lincoln, a powerful ax-wielding youth and a champion wrestler as a young man in New Salem, Illinois, presented a sharp physical contrast to Polk, a weakling and a conspicuous failure at the rough horseplay

of Tennessee frontier life. The cultural contrasts between them as mature men were equally sharp. Both were raised in pious Protestant homes. Polk emerged a devout Methodist, although his wife's Presbyterianism kept him from becoming a church member until the end of his life. Young Lincoln "read the Bible some, though not as much as said," his stepmother remembered, and he never became a church member. Lincoln's education was "defective" by his own admission, and he would have regarded Polk as a "wizzard" for his ability to read Latin and Greek. Lincoln had less than a year's formal schooling and was "never inside of a college or academy building" until he was twenty-eight years old. Polk graduated at the top

Born in Amarillo, Texas, in 1944, Mark E. Neely, Jr., earned a B.A. and a Ph.D. from Yale University. He has been the director of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum in Fort Wayne, Indiana, since 1973. He is the author of The Abraham Lincoln Encyclopedia, recently published by McGraw-Hill. He is a member of the board of directors of the Abraham Lincoln Association.

of his class at the University of North Carolina.¹

Lincoln probably inherited Whig political proclivities from his father, and he saw in the Whig program of economic development for the West the remedy for all the deprivations and disappointments of his hardscrabble youth in frontier Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois. Polk, the college graduate and scion of a land-speculating clan, became a champion of "The People" in the emerging Democratic majority. Polk at one time offered a brief and somewhat embarrassed defense of internal improvements for the sake of national security, but he eventually became an ardent foe of the canals, railroads, and harbor improvements that Lincoln just as ardently sought for most of his political life. Polk, in his nostalgia for the "republican simplicity" of Old Mecklenburg, the scene of his birth and earliest youth in North Carolina, adhered to a political program aimed at spreading simple Mecklenburgs across the continent. Lincoln rarely looked beyond the borders of frontier Illinois until the late 1840s, and he despised the Westerners' restless yearning for more land. He much preferred to see the land the United States already owned "wonderfully changed."²

Lincoln and Polk were destined to become mismatched adversaries. Chance brought Lincoln to the United States Congress while Polk was President. Predictably, the lone Whig from Illinois opposed Polk's policies, bitterly but with little practical result. For his part, Polk did not even notice, failing to mention Lincoln in the voluminous and revealing diaries of his Presidency.³ As President, Polk led the country to victory in the Mexican War and to a grand and popular expansion of territory. Lincoln did not seek reelection to Congress. He returned quietly to his law practice in Illinois.

History, however, at first, awarded the victory to Lincoln. In the presidential con-

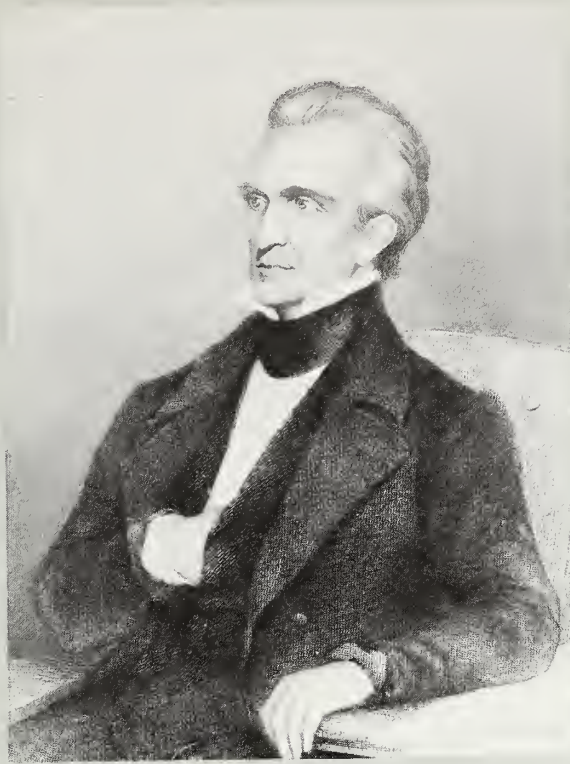
test of 1860, he unashamedly and confidently explained to campaign biographers his opposition to the Mexican War. The antislavery triumph of his Civil War Presidency made the Whig-Republican critique of the Mexican War historical orthodoxy until the end of the nineteenth century. Then Polk had his revenge.

For the first six decades of the twentieth century, the conventional wisdom on Lincoln's relationship with Polk was that Lincoln's opposition to the Mexican War was the product of narrowly partisan pique. According to that theory, in the election of 1848 Lincoln's policies were repudiated by "The People," the simple frontier patriots of his Illinois district. Robbed of their chance of wreaking vengeance on the culprit himself because of the rotation of Whig candidates, the people achieved at least the defeat of the man who did run, Lincoln's former law partner Stephen Trigg Logan. For the first time in years, Illinois' banner Whig district sent a Democrat, Thomas Langrell Harris, to the House of Representatives. Lincoln "could not have been elected a constable or justice of the peace" after he opposed the war—or so Albert Taylor Bledsoe, who had written editorials for Springfield's Whig

¹Emanuel Hertz, *The Hidden Lincoln: From the Letters and Papers of William H. Herndon* (New York: Viking Press, 1938), p. 350; Roy P. Basler, ed., Marion Dolores Pratt and Lloyd A. Dunlap, asst. eds., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1953-1955), II, 459, III, 511, IV, 62 (hereafter cited as *Collected Works*); Charles Sellers, *James K. Polk: Jacksonian, 1795-1843* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 3-55, 210-11.

²Mark E. Neely, Jr., "Abraham Lincoln's Peculiar Relationship with Indiana," *Inland*, 1 (1980), 4-7; Sellers, pp. 91-92, 97, 107.

³Eugene Irving McCormac, *James K. Polk: A Political Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1922), pp. 724-25.



JAMES KNOX POLK
1795-1849

newspaper, remembered. The new focus on Lincoln's political error in opposing the Mexican War went hand in hand with a steady rise in historians' estimations of Polk's presidential ability.⁴

The late 1960s and early 1970s, however, witnessed a gradual reversal of that trend. G. S. Boritt, for example, argued that Lincoln's opposition to the

Mexican War was not a function of narrow partisanship. In fact, Boritt argued, the criticism of Lincoln's stand was itself partisan, being confined mainly to Democrats. In opposing the war, Lincoln was upholding moral principle, just as he would do later in opposing the Kansas-Nebraska Act. As for Logan's loss, he was a poor enough campaigner to have lost the district through his own ineptitude, whatever his predecessor's record in Congress had been. I have agreed elsewhere with Boritt that Lincoln's opposition was not, as William H. Herndon characterized it, a case of "political suicide." But I stressed the politic nature of Lincoln's opposition more than its moral rectitude. Lincoln appears to have followed a course typical of moderate Whigs from the states of the Old Northwest. His lack of interest in running again, I argued, was caused not by fear of losing but by lack of enthusiasm for

⁴For an able survey of the historiography, see G. S. Boritt, "A Question of Political Suicide? Lincoln's Opposition to the Mexican War," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 67 (1974), 86-87; Ramon Eduardo Ruiz, "A Commentary on Morality: Lincoln, Justin H. Smith, and the Mexican War," *ibid.*, 69 (1976), 26-27; Harry E. Pratt, "Albert Taylor Bledsoe: Critic of Lincoln," *Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 41 (1934), 176; Gary M. Maranell, "The Evaluation of Presidents: An Extension of the Schlesinger Polls," *Journal of American History*, 57 (1970), 105-08.



Mexican guerillas attacking a wagon train during the invasion of Vera Cruz

the life of a member of the House of Representatives.⁵

Two forces have been at work in the post-1960 reversal of opinion. First, the climate of opposition to imperialism after the Vietnam War made historians willing to take a fresh look at opponents of America's past wars. Second, more extensive research on the substantial economic vision, if not accomplishments, of the Whig party helped earn it a new hearing before the bar of history on other questions, including its nearly unanimous opposition to "Mr. Polk's war."⁶

If the first factor is now somewhat diminished in importance, the second is still gaining momentum. Polk's Presidency had the effect of intensifying Lincoln's partisanship. It polarized and crystallized Lincoln's political thought, making him as thoroughgoing a Whig as he ever was in his long political career.

By the time Lincoln was in Congress, the

economic program of the Whig party seemed to lack popular appeal. Lincoln clung to the protective tariff and internal improvements, but he knew by the last year of Polk's Presidency that the "question of a

⁵Boritt, "A Question of Political Suicide?" pp. 79-100; Neely, "Lincoln and the Mexican War: An Argument by Analogy," *Civil War History*, 24 (1978), 5-24.

⁶See for example Samuel Eliot Morison, Frederick Merk, and Frank Freidel, *Dissent in Three American Wars* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970); John H. Schroeder, *Mr. Polk's War: American Opposition and Dissent, 1846-1848* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973); and Boritt, *Lincoln and the Economics of the American Dream* (Memphis: Memphis State University Press, 1978). For descriptions of Whigs as modernizers, see in addition to Boritt's book Daniel Walker Howe, *The Political Culture of the American Whigs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), especially pp. 181-209, and Richard J. Jensen, *Illinois: A Bicentennial History* (New York: Norton, 1978), pp. 32-88.

national bank" was "at rest" and that there was little hope of its "reagitation upon Congress." The "question of internal improvements," on the other hand, was "now more distinctly made—has become more intense—than at any former period," as Lincoln said on June 20, 1848. The "question of improvements is verging to a final crisis," Lincoln argued, "and the friends of the policy must now battle, and battle manfully, or surrender all." It was the Whigs' Armageddon.⁷

Lincoln summed up Polk's opposition to internal improvements as a "Do nothing at all, lest you do something wrong" philosophy. Polk had argued that federal internal improvements could "overwhelm the Treasury," could give only "local and partial" benefits in exchange for a general burden on the people, and were unconstitutional. Besides, the states could do as much by collecting "tonnage duties" or amending the Constitution if they thought internal improvements so necessary. Lincoln, doubtless recalling recent Illinois experience, admitted that there was a "tendency to undue expansion" in these projects, but he pointed to the meager appropriations during John Quincy Adams's development-minded administration as proof that Congress could both vote improvements and keep the Treasury solvent. As for the local benefits of a general program, Lincoln suggested that even the United States Navy, which protected all Americans, was especially beneficial "to Charleston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New-York and Boston, beyond what it is to the interior towns of Illinois." Likewise, local improvements provided general benefits; sugar, for example, could be shipped from New Orleans to Buffalo via the

Illinois and Michigan Canal, which was located wholly within Illinois. With characteristic humor, Lincoln observed that tonnage duties, levied on commerce utilizing existing improvements, could never "make any entirely new improvement." Such an argument reminded him of the Irishman's new boots: " 'I shall niver git em on' says Patrick 'till I wear em a day or two, and strech em a little.' " ⁸

These were Whig arguments rehearsed by Lincoln time and time again, but there was something peculiar about Lincoln's address in the House on internal improvements: nine of its twenty-six paragraphs dealt with the constitutional issue.⁹ Lincoln began by saying, "I have not much to say" on the constitutional aspect of the question, but he said more on that issue than in any previous speech.

President Polk had insisted, with a quotation from Thomas Jefferson, that an amendment to the Constitution would be necessary to enable the federal government to support improvements. Lincoln noted that the statement showed, at the very least, that Jefferson thought internal improvements expedient. Looking more closely at the constitutional question, the Illinois Whig answered Polk's appeal to authority with a historical appeal of his own to the arguments of James Kent, New York Supreme Court Justice and author of *Commentaries on American Law*:

It is not to be denied that many great and good men have been *against* the power; but it is insisted that quite as many, as great and as good, have been *for* it; and it is shown that, on a full survey of the whole, Chancellor Kent was of opinion that the arguments of the latter were *vastly* superior. This is but the opinion of a man, but who was that man? He was one of the ablest and most learned lawyers of his age, or of any age. It is no disparagement to Mr. Polk, nor, indeed to any one who devotes much time to politics, to be placed far behind Chancellor Kent as a lawyer. His attitude was most favorable to correct conclusions. He wrote

⁷*Collected Works*, I, 454, 480-81. Boritt refers to "Armageddon" in *Lincoln and the Economics of the American Dream*, p. 126.

⁸*Collected Works*, I, 481-83, 487.

⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 480-90.

cooly, and in retirement. He was struggling to rear a durable monument of fame; and he well knew that *truth* and thoroughly sound reasoning were the only sure foundations. Can the party opinion of a party president, on a law question, as this purely is, be at all compared, or set in opposition to that of such a man, in such an attitude, as Chancellor Kent?¹⁰

Lincoln observed, rather blithely, that the question would "probably never be better settled than it is, until it shall pass under judicial consideration; but I do think no man, who is clear on the questions of expediency, needs feel his conscience much pricked upon this."¹¹

Lincoln's remark was less a sign of impatience with constitutional argument than assertion of his faith that the Constitution was on his side on the internal improvements question,¹² for he went on to say about the amending process:

As a general rule, I think we would [do] much better [to] let it alone. No slight occasion should tempt us to touch it. Better not take the first step, which may lead to a habit of altering it. Better, rather, habituate ourselves to think of it, as unalterable. It can scarcely be made better than it is. New provisions, would introduce new difficulties, and thus create, and increase appetite for still further change. No sir, let it stand as it is. New hands have never touched it. The men who made it, have done their work, and passed away. Who shall improve, on what *they* did?¹³

James Polk's Presidency had led Lincoln to that uncharacteristic statement of Constitution worship. Indeed, the Polk administration and the Mexican War had led him to a new appreciation of the Constitution. William H. Herndon's argument against his partner's opposition to the war had *never* stressed its political inexpediency. Lincoln described Herndon's opposition as "exclusively a constitutional argument." Herndon had argued "that if it shall become *necessary, to repel invasion*, the President may, without violation of the Constitution, cross the line, and *invade* the

territory of another country; and that whether such *necessity* exists in any given case, the President is to be the *sole* judge." Lincoln replied: "Allow the President to invade a neighboring nation whenever *he* shall deem it necessary to repel an invasion, and you allow him to do so, *whenever he may choose to say* he deems it necessary for such purpose — and you allow him to make war at pleasure." To this, Lincoln added a short lesson in constitutional history:

The provision of the Constitution giving the war-making power to Congress, was dictated, as I understand it, by the following reasons. Kings had always been involving and impoverishing their people in wars, pretending generally, if not always, that the good of the people was the object. This, our Convention understood to be the most oppressive of all Kingly oppressions; and they resolved to so frame the Constitution that *no one man* should hold the power of bringing this oppression upon us. But your view destroys the whole matter, and places our President where kings have always stood.¹⁴

Lincoln's argument against the war was primarily that it was unconstitutional and unnecessary. He had little internationalist perspective. Before he took his seat in Congress in 1847, his career had been confined to state politics and domestic issues.

¹⁰This version of Lincoln's June 20, 1848, speech is from the Robert Todd Lincoln Collection of the Papers of Abraham Lincoln. Library of Congress (microfilm in Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield).

¹¹*Collected Works*, I, 486.

¹²Boritt suggests that Lincoln's statement showed a cavalier attitude toward questions of constitutionality. *Lincoln and the Economics of the American Dream*, p. 130.

¹³*Collected Works*, I, 488.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 451-52. Herndon's argument is stated as Lincoln understood it. Herndon's letters to Lincoln about the war have never been found.

Foreign nations appeared in his early writings rarely, and then usually as conspirators against American liberties or as inferiors. In 1844, for example, he had campaigned for Polk's presidential opponent Henry Clay by arguing that the British were conspiring with the Democrats to lower tariff barriers.¹⁵ Like most Westerners he had a low opinion of the civilization of Latin America, and his references to Latinos were never flattering. In 1852 he said that the people of Cuba were "neither desirous of, nor fit for civil liberty"; he called Mexicans "greasers."¹⁶ Lincoln was concerned not about international rights but about the Mexican War's threat to the American Constitution.

From all evidence, however, Lincoln was genuinely worried by Polk's actions. He was not a bookish lawyer. He apparently never read a lawbook all the way through once he started practice.¹⁷ Yet Polk's transgressions sent Lincoln scurrying to Chancellor Kent's *Commentaries*. Lincoln's reference to Kent's support of federal aid for internal improvements is the only reference to Kent in all of Lincoln's known writings.

Strict construction of the Constitution was not a hallmark of Whiggery *except* as a limitation on the President. Born of opposition to a strong President, Andrew Jackson, and almost always in opposition to the administration in power, the Whig party hated the executive veto.¹⁸ Lincoln did not embrace the Whig preference for a weak Presidency until 1848. In large

measure, Lincoln was forced to adopt that view because the Whig presidential candidate in that year, Zachary Taylor, had neither a platform nor a strong partisan identification. About all that could be said to recommend Taylor was that he would not force his views on Congress. He would simply execute the legislative will. The political imperative of defending the Whig conception of the Presidency in 1848 should not blind historians to the force of Polk's example in impelling Lincoln toward the Whig view for the first time in his life. "To you," Lincoln said to the Democrats, "the President, and the country, seems to be all one. You are interested to see no distinction between them; and I venture to suggest that possibly your interest blinds you a little. We see the distinction, as we think, clearly enough." To elect Democrat Lewis Cass instead of Taylor would surely invite "a course of policy, leading to new wars, new acquisitions of territory and still further extensions of slavery." Polk's example was still very much on Lincoln's mind.¹⁹

Polk's example and the awkward political necessities of Taylor's campaign seem to have led Lincoln to the Whig view only temporarily. Taylor had hardly assumed office before Lincoln was warning Secretary of State John Middleton Clayton that the President must not appear "a mere man of straw." Taylor "must occasionally say . . . , 'by the Eternal,' 'I take the responsibility.' Those phrases were the 'Samson's locks' of Gen. Jackson, and we dare not disregard the lessons of experience." Political popularity depended on some flexing of executive muscle, Lincoln insisted. "It is said Gen. Taylor and his officers held a council of war, at Palo Alto (I believe); and that he then fought the battle against unanimous opinion of those officers. This fact (no matter whether rightfully or wrongfully) gives him more popularity than ten thousand submissions, however really wise and magnanimous

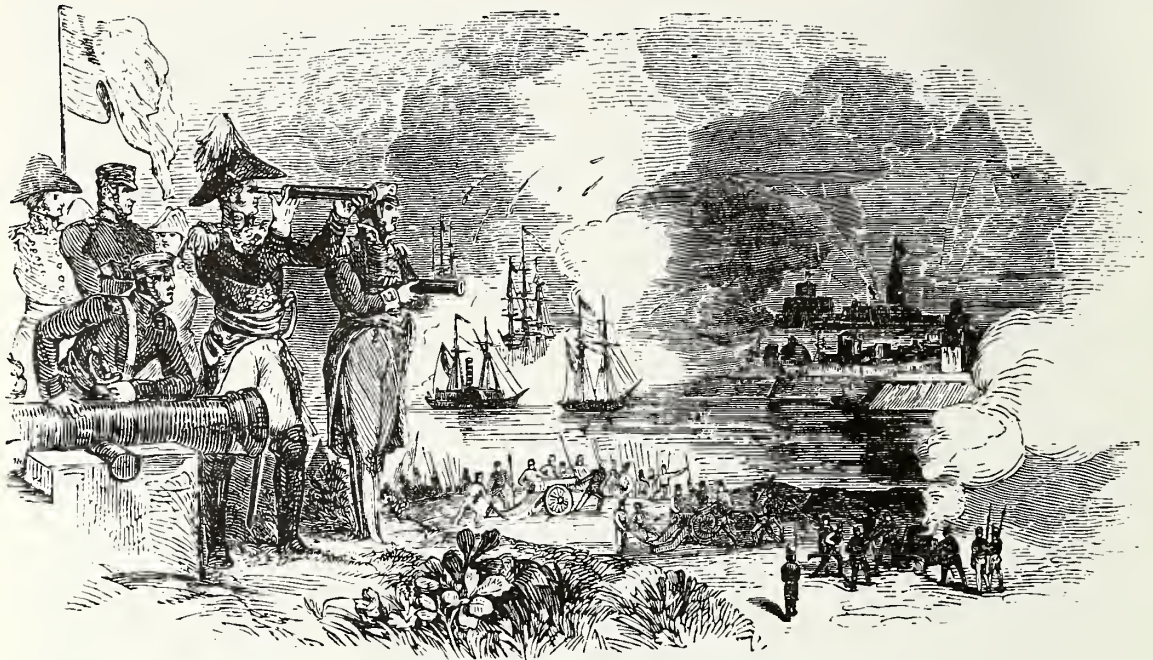
¹⁵Anson G. Henry to John J. Hardin, Feb. 13, 1844, John J. Hardin Papers, Chicago Historical Society.

¹⁶*Collected Works*, II, 153, III, 358. Lincoln's reference to Mexicans as "a race of mongrels" in 1848 was apparently an ironic reference to Democratic racism (*ibid.*, III, 235).

¹⁷John P. Frank, *Lincoln as a Lawyer* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1961), p. 11.

¹⁸*Collected Works*, I, 339.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 515, 505.



The bombardment of Vera Cruz, from an 1849 history

those submissions may be.”²⁰ Lincoln’s rather hasty retreat from the Whig view of the presidential office was not a sign of insincerity or hypocrisy. Polk had made a weak President look awfully good to Lincoln, but new events, which affected Lincoln deeply, made him wish for more strength in the new Executive.

Lincoln “forebore” asking that the Taylor administration appoint him to a lucrative Land Office position. His delay allowed Justin Butterfield to have the inside track for the job — despite the fact that Butterfield had “fought for Mr. Clay against Gen Taylor to the bitter end.” When Lincoln finally put forth a serious effort to get the job for himself, it was too late. He grumbled to a clerk in the Land Office, “It will now mortify me deeply if Gen. Taylor’s administration shall trample all my wishes in the dust merely to gratify these men.” Butterfield did get the appointment, and it was while laboring under this mortification that Lincoln began to

wish that the President were a stronger man. Lincoln thought that Taylor was in favor of his appointment, and he therefore quickly became critical of the President’s tendency to defer to the recommendations of the departments. Despite that temporary sense of frustration at the President’s weakness, Lincoln apparently learned from the unfortunate experience of Polk’s strong Presidency. In 1861 he said, “My political education strongly inclines me against a very free use” of the veto. As President, Lincoln used it sparingly indeed.²¹

It was inevitable that Lincoln would

²⁰*Ibid.*, II, 60.

²¹*Ibid.*, pp. 43–44 and IV, 214.

²²Henry to Lincoln, Dec. 29, 1847, Robert Todd Lincoln Collection of the Papers of Abraham Lincoln; *Speech of Henry Clay at the Lexington Mass Meeting, 13th November, 1847* . . . (New York: George F. Nesbitt, 1847).

²³Henry to Lincoln, Dec. 29, 1847.

disagree with a President who, like Polk, was so perfect an embodiment of the Democratic vision of the West. Polk's power to make Lincoln, temporarily at least, adopt newly conservative views of the Constitution and the Presidency stemmed mostly from the Mexican War. Yet despite Lincoln's absorption with that issue, his reaction to the Mexican War was anything but extreme.

Lincoln's firm grasp of the realities of political opinion in central Illinois was proven by a letter written to him shortly after he assumed his seat in Congress. In December, 1847, Dr. Anson G. Henry, editor of the *Tazewell Whig* and a tireless Whig party organizer then living in Pekin, expressed "a very great anxiety to know what course you design taking in relation to, the Mexican War." Henry had been disturbed by signs that the Whig party was going to take "strong ground against Territory." Even before Lincoln took his seat, Henry Clay had stated his agreement with the "immortal fourteen" who voted against the original appropriation for the war.²² Anson Henry had written Lincoln in December, 1847: "If this no Territory doctrine is to be made the test of Whiggery I shall retire from all participation in the coming canvass with the firm conviction that Locofocoism will continue triumphant." Clay's speech, Henry warned, "will beat us as a party for years to come, unless we can unite upon 'Old Zac' and allow him to run without any other pledge than that of administer[ing] the Government in strict accordance with the Constitution and for the best interests of the whole people." Henry advised Lincoln: "I hope you will not feel disposed to go with Mr. Clay against all Territory. If you do, I am fearful you will be with the minority party for a long time to come. It would be painful in the extreme to part company with you after having fought with you side by side so long. But if the Whigs as a party join issues with Mr. Polk & take the side of 'No Territory,' I



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shall at the polls (but no where else) *sustain Mr Polk.*"²³

Lincoln did not need the warning. Henry wrote the letter on December 29, 1847. On January 3, 1848, before Lincoln could possibly have received the letter, he faced the test of how far he would go in support of Clay's position. Congressman Charles Hudson of Massachusetts offered the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Committee on Military Affairs be directed to inquire into the expediency of requesting the President of the United States to withdraw to the east bank of the Rio Grande our armies now in Mexico and to propose to the Mexican Government forthwith a treaty of peace on the following basis, namely: That we relinquish all claim to indemnity for the expenses of the war, and that the boundary between the United States and Mexico shall be

established at or near the desert between the Nueces and the Rio Grande; that Mexico shall be held to pay all just claims due to our citizens at the commencement of the war, and that a convention shall be entered into by the two nations to provide for the liquidation of those claims and the mode of payment.²⁴

This was a "no territory" resolution, in other words, and Lincoln voted against it. He had worked far too long with the Whigs of his district, men like Anson Henry, to have his head turned by the great national leaders like Clay who took a position in opposition to the war that was too extreme for the West. Lincoln knew Henry's views before they were put into words, for they were Lincoln's own views and probably those of most Whig leaders in the district as well.

Lincoln disliked "Manifest Destiny," but the issue of territorial expansion never aroused him greatly. In 1845 he admitted that "individually I never was much interested in the Texas question." Nine years later he noted blandly that "Jefferson saw the necessity of our government possessing the whole valley of the Mississippi." At Galesburg in 1858, Stephen A. Douglas even got him to say, "I am not generally opposed to the acquisition of additional territory." And when he was looking anxiously for workable colonization schemes early in the Civil War, Lincoln as President could say: "Having practiced the acquisition of territory for nearly sixty years, the question of constitutional power to do so is no longer an open one with us. The power was questioned at first by Mr. Jefferson, who, however, in the purchase of Louisiana, yielded his scruples on the plea of great expediency." Expansionism did not decisively separate Polk from Lincoln.²⁵

Neither did slavery. To be sure, the two men viewed the peculiar institution very differently. But Polk's defense of slavery was just the sort that Lincoln was willing to accept from honest Southerners.²⁶ Lincoln never wanted expansion so far south as to

aggravate the question of slavery, and Polk's expansion surely did that. Still, Lincoln never blamed the Mexican War on the Slave Power's lust for new slave territory, as many antiwar politicians in the North did. He never accused Polk of being a tool of the Slave Power. After Lincoln attended a meeting in Wilmington, Delaware, on June 10, 1848, a newspaper reported his speech: "He did not believe with many of his fellow citizens that this war was originated for the purpose of extending slave territory, but it was his opinion, frequently expressed, that it was a war of conquest brought into existence to catch votes." In 1860, after more than a decade of reflection and six years of bitter involvement with the slavery question, Lincoln still "thought the principal motive [for starting the Mexican War] . . . was to divert public attention from the surrender of 'Fifty-four, forty, or fight' to Great Britain, on the Oregon boundary question."²⁷

Whig economic views separated Lincoln from Polk, as did Polk's alarmingly expansive view of the presidential office. In the Wilmington speech, Lincoln referred to "the history of James K. Polk's administration—the abuse of power which characterized it—the high-handed and despotic exercise of the veto power, and the utter disregard of the will of the people, in refusing to give assent to measures which their representatives passed for the good and prosperity of the country."²⁸ In other words, political party, and not issues that divided parties on sectional lines, caused Lincoln to oppose Polk so vehemently. Such was the general effect of Polk's Presidency on members of Lincoln's

²⁴*Congressional Globe*, 30 Cong., 1 Sess. (1848), p. 93.

²⁵*Collected Works*, I, 347, II, 231, IV, 234, V, 48.

²⁶Sellers, pp. 107–08.

²⁷*Collected Works*, I, 476, IV, 66.

²⁸*Ibid.*, I, 476.

party.²⁹ Though Polk drove Lincoln to new statements of Whig philosophy, he was not able to force him into carelessly extreme political positions. Lincoln was not one to get carried away in Washington and then rush home to mend his political fences. When Democrats tried to raise the Mexican War issue to embarrass Lincoln in his campaign for the Senate in 1858, he faced the charges with complete confidence. He told a worried Joseph Medill, for example, "You may safely deny that I ever gave any vote for withholding any supplies whatever, from officers or soldiers of the Mexican War. . . . I can not be mistaken; for *I had my eye always upon it*."³⁰

How, then, can one explain the broad currency of the charge that Lincoln committed political suicide by opposing the Mexican War? America's status as a world power in the early twentieth century made opposition to expansion seem narrow-minded. The extraordinary influence of *Herndon's Lincoln* was important too. Herndon knew much about Lincoln that no one else did, but Herndon was a peculiar Whig in having no complaints about Mr. Polk's war.

Just as important, but much less well known, was Douglas's development of the "political suicide" argument in his famous campaign against Lincoln in 1858. The Democrats' false charge that Lincoln had failed to support America's soldiers is well known,³¹ but Douglas had a more carefully wrought argument than that. Accusing

Lincoln and Lyman Trumbull of conspiring to abolitionize the Whig and Democratic parties respectively in order to gain Illinois' two Senate seats as Republicans, the Little Giant charged in the Freeport debate: "Lincoln on the one hand and Trumbull on the other, being disappointed politicians, and [by 1854] having retired or been driven to obscurity by an outraged constituency because of their political sins, formed a scheme to abolitionize the two parties and lead the Old Line Whigs and Old Line Democrats captive, bound hand and foot into the Abolition camp."³² The "political suicide" argument thus had its origin in political partisanship. It came to fruition in the work of one of the greatest Lincoln biographers of all time, Albert J. Beveridge. Uniting ardent enthusiasm for America's new role in world affairs with a strong appreciation of Douglas, Beveridge forged a systematic and influential argument for the disastrousness of Lincoln's opposition to the Mexican War.³³

James K. Polk died on June 15, 1849. His name appears only once in Lincoln's known speeches and writings after that. Lincoln seems almost to have forgotten some of the lessons of Polk's Presidency. When he became President himself, Lincoln proved in many respects to be similar to Polk. Both Chief Executives steered the United States to victory in war, and both played a vigorous personal role in determining grand strategy. Both offered cold comfort to dissenters: Polk's annual message of December 8, 1846, informed critics of the war in Mexico that a "more effectual means could not have been devised to encourage the enemy and protract the war than to advocate and adhere to their cause, and thus give them 'aid and comfort.'"³⁴ Though Lincoln did not invoke the language with which the Constitution defines treason, he nevertheless gave critics of the Civil War a similarly starchy response. A public letter Lincoln wrote in

²⁹Michael F. Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1978), pp. 46-49.

³⁰*Collected Works*, II, 474. Emphasis mine.

³¹Boritt, *Lincoln and the Economics of the American Dream*, p. 296.

³²*Collected Works*, III, 60.

³³Beveridge, *Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1858* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1928), I, 113-17.

³⁴K. Jack Bauer, *The Mexican War, 1846-1848* (New York: Macmillan, 1974), p. 361.

June of 1863 characterized the libertarian criticism of his administration as a factor on which the Confederacy had counted when the states seceded:

Under cover of "Liberty of speech" "Liberty of the press" and "*Habeas corpus*" they hoped to keep on foot amongst us a most efficient corps of spies, informers, suppliers, and aiders and abettors of their cause in a thousand ways. They knew that in times such as they were inaugurating, by the constitution itself, the "*Habeas corpus*" might be suspended; but they also knew they had friends who would make a question as to *who* [Congress or President] was to suspend it; meanwhile their spies and others might remain at large to help on their cause. Or if, as has happened, the executive should suspend the writ, without ruinous waste, instances of arresting innocent persons might occur, as are always likely to occur in such cases; and then a clamor could be raised in regard to this, which might be, at least, of some service to the insurgent cause.³⁵

Little wonder historians rate Polk and Lincoln highly for "strength of action" (Lincoln, second; Polk, eleventh), "presidential activeness" (Lincoln, eighth; Polk, tenth), and "practicality" as opposed to "idealism" (Lincoln, seventh; Polk, first).³⁶

In one important respect, however, Lincoln and Polk offer sharp contrasts as Commanders in Chief, and it is possible that the difference stemmed from a lesson Lincoln learned from Polk's Presidency. On May 29, 1846, shortly after the Mexican War began, Lincoln wrote from Springfield a long "confidential" letter to John J. Hardin, a former Illinois congressman who was at that time recruiting for the First Regiment, Illinois Volunteer Infantry.³⁷

Genl. [Merrett L.] Covell has just arrived here direct from Washington. I infer from some things he says, that some Loco foco rascality is in contemplation in relation to officering the army. . . . He says . . . that a supplemental bill, to the army bill, had been introduced into one branch of congress, authorizing the President to appoint two Majors general, and four

Brigadiers. This, in connection, with his expressions of doubt, as to whether Genl. Scott, will proceed to the seat of war, induces me to think they even contemplate placing these new made heroes over the heads of Scott, Gaines, Taylor & others. *You* will understand, while *I* do not, whether, by the organization of the army, this is possible. If it is *possible*, it is, in my opinion, decidedly *probable*.³⁸

The law did not allow Polk to do what Lincoln feared, but the Illinois politician correctly divined Polk's intentions. The Commander in Chief in the Mexican War proved utterly incapable of severing his knowledge of General Winfield Scott's and General Zachary Taylor's Whig proclivities from any appraisal of their military abilities. On November 14, 1846, Polk discussed with his Cabinet the failure of the administration's original strategy of bringing Mexico to peace talks by occupying her politically unhappy northern provinces and thus threatening her with secession by a large segment of her contiguous territory. A more direct southern campaign on Vera Cruz and perhaps a strike at her jugular, Mexico City, now seemed necessary. But who would command the new expedition? Polk noted in his diary: "The Cabinet fully discussed the conduct of Gen'l Taylor and were agreed that he was unfit for the chief command, that he had not mind enough for the station, that he was a bitter political partisan & had no sympathies with the administration, and that he had been recently controlled . . . by . . . cunning & shrewd men of more talents than himself

³⁵*Collected Works*, VI, 263.

³⁶Maranell, pp. 108, 109.

³⁷*Record of the Services of Illinois Soldiers in the Black Hawk War, 1831-32, and the Mexican War, 1846-48* (Springfield: Journal Co., 1902), p. 194.

³⁸*Collected Works*, I, 381.

³⁹Milo M. Quaife, ed., *The Diary of James K. Polk During His Presidency, 1845 to 1849* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1910), II, 236, 241.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, II, 242-43, 276-77, 286, 334.



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[who] had controlled him for political purposes." President Polk stated that he "had never suffered politics to mingle with the conduct of his war," but he first suggested Major General William Orlando Butler, a Democrat, as commander of the Vera Cruz campaign. Within three days, the administration was strongly considering a Vera Cruz-Mexico City campaign, a plan suggested by Senator Thomas Hart Benton and General Winfield Scott. Once again the question arose: Who would be the commander? "Gen'l Scott it [was known] was hostile to the administration, and it was apprehended would have no sympathy with it in carrying out its plans." Yet Scott, as the majority of the Cabinet pointed out, was the highest-ranking officer in the Army and would probably have to be given the nod.³⁹

Benton's plan for the Mexico City campaign included the suggestion that Benton himself lead the expedition, but Polk could

"not well see" how Scott's selection could be avoided. On November 18 Polk decided to follow up on Benton's idea of having Congress revive the rank of Lieutenant General so that the President could put the Missouri Democrat over Scott and Taylor. Polk and Benton doubted that Congress would pass the necessary legislation, and they were right. After Polk sounded out numerous politicians, he still doubted it, but he wanted the appointment so badly that he recommended the legislation anyway. The Lieutenant General bill died in the Senate.⁴⁰

Polk always believed firmly in "the impossibility of conducting the War successfully when the General in Chief of the

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An 1849 drawing of the wounding of William Orlando Butler

army did not sympathize with the Government, and cooperate with it in the prosecution of the War."⁴¹ He never ceased looking for ways to replace Scott with a Democrat. In March of 1847 Polk asked his Cabinet whether Benton, if commissioned a Major General, could be put in command without recalling the four Major Generals senior to him—Scott, Taylor, Butler, and Robert O. Patterson. The answer was negative. When Polk heard a few days later that Butler was wounded and might not be able to resume command, he wasted no time in

telling Benton that they were much closer to their goal. Benton was cool to the idea, but Polk, although he could not see his way "entirely clear to remove three Senior Maj'r Generals," thought he "might do so in a short time." Benton at last decided to have no part of it. Benton, not Polk, killed the idea.⁴²

Lincoln said nothing further about the "rascality" of the Polk administration's attempts at juggling the Army's high command for political reasons. Yet he may have taken the lesson to heart. Whig

generals had faithfully won the battles of the war that the Whig party hated. To be sure, Lincoln as President proved to be a good party man who frankly admitted that his administration "distributed to its party friends as nearly all the civil patronage as any administration ever did." As Commander in Chief he kept a careful watch on military appointments and doled them out to the ethnic groups and political factions whose support seemed necessary for an effective war effort. Mathematical necessity dictated that Democrats receive their fair share. "The administration," Lincoln explained, "could not even start in this [war], without assistance outside of its party." He thought it "mere nonsense to suppose a minority [the Republicans] could put down a majority in rebellion." Civilian jobs went almost entirely to Republicans, but military appointments had to ensure both parties' support on the battlefield.⁴³

Polk recognized the necessity of appointing some Whig officers, but Lincoln's willingness to tolerate political differences in the very highest commands departed from the partisan example of the Polk administration. Lincoln never accused Democratic generals of sabotaging the war effort. Polk rarely mentioned Taylor and Scott without making such an accusation. Indeed, that may have been not only Lincoln's greatest difference from Polk as Commander in Chief but also his greatest difference from the Radical Republicans. Lincoln never doubted the sincerity of the Radicals and seems to have agreed with

them on fundamental antislavery principles, but the Radicals' hectoring of Democratic generals for want of heart to fight the Republican war was completely foreign to him. For all his complaining about the Democratic General George Brinton McClellan, for example, Lincoln never accused him of political unwillingness to fight. The President knew that the war "should be conducted on military knowledge" and not on "political affinity."⁴⁴

The Mexican War had confirmed the lesson any intelligent Whig had learned from the impressive political power of Andrew Jackson's military reputation. Lincoln strongly suspected that Thomas L. Harris's military reputation had been too much for Stephen Logan, and he took particular pleasure when the Whigs turned the tables on the Democrats in 1848. "Taylor's nomination," Lincoln told Herndon, "takes the locos on the blind side. It turns the war thunder against them. The war is now to them, the gallows of Haman, which they built for us, and on which they are doomed to be hanged themselves."⁴⁵ As President, Lincoln ran the same risk with Democratic generals that Polk had taken in utilizing Whig generals, but he never murmured a word of protest. On the contrary, when faced with the far more serious threat of encouraging not just a potential rival for the Presidency but a possible dictator, President Lincoln took the risk — hence the justifiable fame of his letter of January 26, 1863, to General Joseph Hooker:

I have heard, in such way as to believe it, of your recently saying that both the Army and the Government needed a Dictator. Of course it was not *for* this, but in spite of it, that I have given you the command. Only those generals who gain successes, can set up dictators. What I now ask of you is military success, and I will risk the dictatorship. The government will support you to the utmost of its ability, which is neither more nor less than it has done and will do for all commanders.⁴⁶

⁴¹*Ibid.*, pp. 275-76.

⁴²*Ibid.*, pp. 409-14.

⁴³*Collected Works*, V, 494.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, I, 477. Haman, in the Book of Esther, was an enemy of the Jews and was hanged on the gallows built for Mordecai.

⁴⁶*Collected Works*, VI, 78-79.

After Lincoln's death the Republican party's reliance on waving the bloody shirt helped obscure his willingness to trust the loyalty of such Democratic generals as McClellan. The postwar party's easy equation of Democracy with rebellion led many to think that Lincoln dismissed McClellan in 1862 for political reasons. Military historians who disliked political influence on the battlefield therefore found it difficult to justify Lincoln's actions. When General Alexander S. Webb, a Union veteran, studied the problem of Lincoln's relations with General McClellan, he concluded that only precedents from the Polk and Madison administrations would have justified the President's interference with the general.⁴⁷ Webb asked Robert Todd Lincoln whether he knew of any Cabinet notes that would have based Lincoln's interference with McClellan on similar interference by Polk and Madison in earlier wars. Robert Lincoln confessed to "pretty strong feelings on this subject" and replied: "My excuse for saying that I would hardly be content to rest his justification for his actions at the time you mention upon the existence of precedents during the war of 1812 or the war with Mexico [is that] I might do so if a precedent for General McClellan as a Commander in Chief could be found—certainly not otherwise."⁴⁸ Winfield Scott, the greatest American general of his generation, was no "precedent for General McClellan," and President Polk's partisan handling of generals proved to be no precedent for Lincoln's conduct as Commander in Chief.

If Lincoln, somewhere deep inside, resolved to handle generals of the opposite party differently than Polk had, it was a legacy of Polk's Presidency that ran counter to the major effect of those years on Lincoln. In general, Polk's Presidency made Lincoln more partisan. Horrified by the example of Polk's administration, Lincoln was among the earliest Whig leaders who insisted that the party must run a win-

ner in 1848. Zachary Taylor's Whig credentials were suspect, but Lincoln reached out to this popular military hero as though he were the last hope of a drowning party.

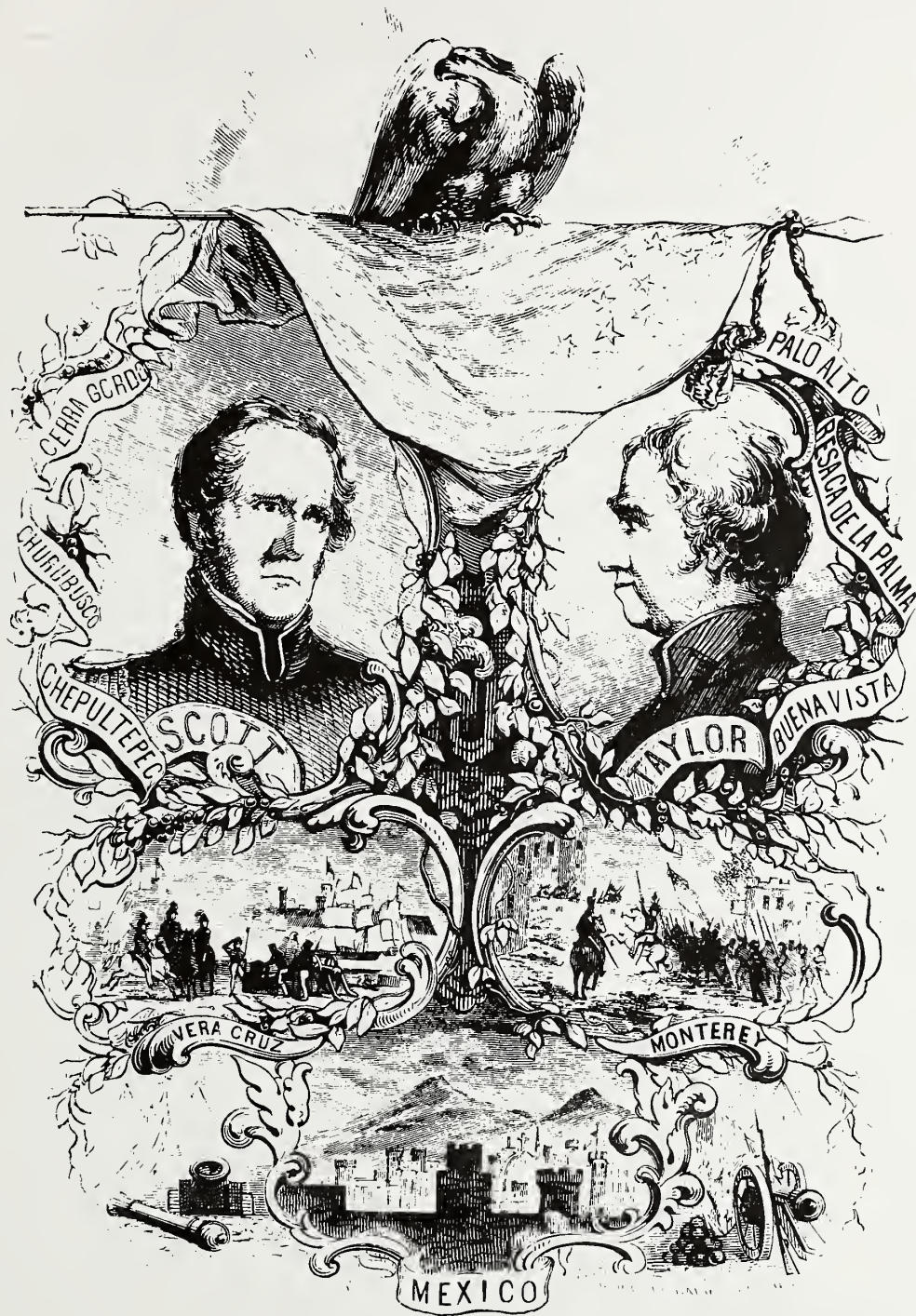
More than ever, Lincoln felt impelled to close Whig ranks. He had always been more organizationally minded than most Whigs, and Polk's Presidency accelerated that trend in his thought. Ironically, Taylor combined popularity enough to beat the Democrats with exasperatingly feeble partisanship, thus moving Lincoln further toward embracing the partisan views of nineteenth-century spoilsmanship. When the Whigs first gained the Presidency with William Henry Harrison in 1840 Lincoln had taken the high road on government appointments to office. Even while advising John Todd Stuart on local appointments after Harrison's election, Lincoln had said, "I am, as you know, opposed to removals to make places for our friends."⁴⁹ Things were different after the Polk years. In 1849 Lincoln wrote to the Postmaster General recommending a replacement for the Springfield postmaster "whenever there shall be a vacancy." Lincoln admitted that the only objection to the Democratic incumbent was that he was "an active partizan in opposition to us" and that Polk had reappointed him after Taylor's election. Lincoln would "give no opinion . . . as to whether he should or should not be removed."⁵⁰ He no longer said flatly that such men should not be removed. Lincoln's failure to get the Land

⁴⁷For Webb's observations on this research, see his *Army in the Civil War; The Peninsula-McClellan's Campaign of 1862*, III (New York: Scribner's, 1881), 173-75.

⁴⁸Lincoln's letter is dated June 18, 1881, Robert Todd Lincoln Letter Books, Illinois State Historical Library. The discussion in Webb's book missed the point of Robert Lincoln's reply.

⁴⁹*Collected Works*, I, 221.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, II, 39.



Heroes of the Mexican War, Generals Winfield Scott and Zachary Taylor

Office job from Taylor had a similar effect. Taylor, Lincoln realized, "will not go the doctrine of removals very strongly." Leaving many Democrats in office gave "the greater reason, when an office or job is not already in democratic hands, that it should be given to a Whig." If "less than this is done for our friends," the Springfield Whig warned, "I think they will have just cause to complain."⁵¹ Lincoln was changing directions, and it was but a short step from that view to the one he would embrace as President, when he made a clean sweep of Democratic incumbents.

For Lincoln, the lessons of Polk's Presidency were mixed, and they differed in their staying power. Lincoln's embrace of a weak conception of the Presidency hardly outlasted the failure of Polk's successor to reward those Whigs—among them, Lincoln himself—who had helped put him in office. Only a sparing use of the veto power remained as a legacy of his opposition to Polk and other strong Democratic Presidents. Lincoln's new tendency toward Constitution worship was nowhere in evidence during the Civil War years, when, as President, he played fast and loose with his old constitutional ideas

in order to save the Union and free the slaves. He came eventually to champion a constitutional amendment.⁵² The value of the spoils system, as much Taylor's legacy as Polk's, was a lesson he would not forget. Unless he gave all civilian jobs to party friends, President Lincoln knew, the Republicans might suffer the ignominious fate of the Whigs. And he learned an equally lasting lesson in nonpartisanship in the area of presidential relations with military commanders of the other party.

The most important immediate legacy of the Polk years, which were Lincoln's only years in Washington before he became President, was not a political lesson at all. In fact, it was anti-political. Lincoln began to lose interest in politics. Life as a Representative proved dull. Polk's Presidency was hardly inspiring to a Whig, and Taylor's was, ironically, even more dispiriting. When he left Washington in 1849, Lincoln, for all he knew or cared, was leaving it—and political life—for good.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁵²J. G. Randall, *Constitutional Problems under Lincoln* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1951), p. 383n.

Eyewitness to War

PRINTS AND DAGUERREOTYPES OF THE MEXICAN WAR, 1846-1848

An exhibition organized by the Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth

NEWS RELEASE

Amon Carter Museum Premieres Exhibition on the Mexican War

November 18, 1989-January 14, 1990

The Mexican War is best remembered for opening vast new territories of the American Southwest, but it also marked an important moment in the history of art and journalism. It became the most widely reported war up to that time, as not only newspaper correspondents but also artists and printmakers tried to bring news from the field to the people back home. The Amon Carter Museum will present the war as it was depicted in lithographs, engravings, and photographs in the exhibition *Eyewitness to War: Prints and Daguerreotypes of the Mexican War, 1846-1848*, from November 18, 1989 through January 14, 1990.

The exhibition will focus on the Mexican War as the advent of a new era of communication, when lithography and photography joined the written word to provide eyewitness reports of the war. Just as newspapers raced to publish the latest accounts of each event, lithographers and engravers rushed into print with images of battles, scenic views of areas where troops were located, and renderings of the war's heroes.

Although hundreds of different engravings and lithographs of the Mexican War were produced between 1846 and 1848, this exhibition concentrates on those prints that have some eyewitness connection, and were reproduced from sketches made at the battle site: soldiers and naval officers on duty in Mexico often took time after the battle had ended to sketch the conflict as they recalled it, and others depicted the scenes of famous battles during the months of occupation that followed. These sketches varied greatly in artistic quality, but many were sent back to the United States to be printed by lithographers like Nathaniel Currier and Sarony & Major in New York or hometown publishers like Klauprecht and Menzel in Cincinnati, then sold in shops and on streetcorners to a public hungry for the latest news of the war. Newspapers such as *The New York Herald* also

(more)

reproduced sketches as engravings for the front page. Since written reports usually reached the United States before any sketches drawn at the scene, printers also published artist's conceptions, which translated on-the-scenes reports from military officers or from journalists like George Wilkins Kendall of the *New Orleans Daily Picayune*.

In addition to its substantial collection of eyewitness prints, the Amon Carter Museum possesses the largest known collection of daguerreotypes made in Mexico during the war. Despite the difficulties of obtaining supplies, itinerant daguerreotypists followed troops in northern Mexico and photographed scenes and individuals (usually officers) during the American occupation. Since each daguerreotype is a unique positive image, incapable of being duplicated, these photographs could not be reproduced for mass audiences, but they remain the most accurate images of the individuals and landmarks of the American venture into Mexico.

To accompany the exhibition, the Amon Carter Museum and the Smithsonian Institution Press have copublished a 384-page book containing 24 color plates, 280 duotones, and 5 maps (\$45.00). An essay by Rick Stewart discusses Mexican War-era journalism and printmaking, and Martha A. Sandweiss analyzes daguerreotype photography in Mexico. The catalogue section by Ben H. Huseman provides extensive information about the artists and the events depicted in each print and photograph.

Eyewitness to War has been organized by the Amon Carter Museum with the financial support of the Union Pacific Corporation and its operating companies - Union Pacific Railroad Company, Union Pacific Resources Company, and the Union Pacific Realty Company.

Lecture Series

In conjunction with the special exhibition *Eyewitness to War: Prints and Daguerreotypes of the Mexican War, 1846-1848*, the Amon Carter Museum and Texas Christian University have jointly organized **The United States War with Mexico, 1846-1848**, a six-week lecture series. Classes will meet Tuesdays, November 7 through December 12, from 7:00 until 8:30 p.m. in the Museum Theater. Scholars from the United States and Mexico will lead discussions of the art, history, popular culture, and social issues of the Mexican War, or the Invasion of Yanqui, as it was known in Mexico.

(more)

To register for this course, which has a tuition charge of \$38.00, contact the Office of Extended Education, Texas Christian University, at 817/921-7134. A complete schedule of classes follows.

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|-------------|---|
| November 7 | The Mexican War: An Overview by Thomas R. Hietala, Associate Professor of History, Grinnell College, Iowa. |
| November 14 | The Mexican War and the First Foreign Correspondents by Anantha Babbili, Chairman of the Department of Journalism, Texas Christian University. |
| November 21 | Popular Culture of the Mexican War by Robert Johannsen, J. G. Randall Distinguished Professor of History, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and the author of <i>To the Halls of Montezumas: The Mexican War in the American Imagination</i> . |
| November 28 | Invasion Yanqui: The Mexican Point of View by Josefina Vasquez, Professor of History, El Colegio de Mexico, Mexico City. |
| December 5 | Daguerreotypes of the Mexican War by Martha A. Sandweiss, Director of the Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, Massachusetts, and author of the catalogue essay on Mexican War daguerreotypes. |
| December 12 | Prints of the Mexican War by Rick Stewart, Curator of Western Painting and Sculpture, Amon Carter Museum, and author of the catalogue essay on Mexican War prints. |

END

For further information contact the Public Affairs Office, Amon Carter Museum, 817/738-1933.

The Amon Carter Museum is located at 3501 Camp Bowie Boulevard, Fort Worth, Texas. It is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. until 5 p.m., Sunday from 1 until 5:30 p.m. Admission is free. Tours of the collection are given at 2 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday. Group tours must be scheduled at least two weeks in advance by calling the Tour Coordinator at (817) 738-6811.

Lincoln Repulsed "Win Peace" Wolves In Sheep's Clothing In 1862 To Fight War, Gross Says

WHEN Abraham Lincoln was a member of the national House of Representatives, in 1848, the Democratic press in his Illinois district charged him with being "imbecile and silly," and impugned his patriotism, charging him with giving aid and comfort to Mexico, with which the United States was then at war.

This was pointed out today, in an address to the Allen County Republican Club, by William J. Gross, editorial editor of The News-Sentinel, who declared that Lincoln's critics on Democratic editorial pages

published in his home community described the "Rail Splitter" as "a slanderer of the President," "a defender of the butchery of the Alamo," and as having made "a base, dastardly, and treasonable attack," upon President James K. Polk.

"These same Democratic papers," Mr. Gross continued, "called Lincoln 'a black disgrace to the Seventh Illinois District,' 'one who has heaped odium and infamy upon the living brave and the illustrious dead,' 'this Benedict Arnold,'" and so on and so on.

"These attacks upon Congressman Lincoln were provoked by a speech which Lincoln had made in vigorous attack upon President Polk's foreign policy, which he described as 'from beginning to end, the sheerest deception.' The President was charged by the Illinois Representative as feeling 'the blood of this war, like the blood of Abel, crying to heaven against him.' Lincoln declared that President Polk had 'plunged into the war, and swept on and on until, disappointed in his calculations of the ease with which the enemy might be subdued, he now finds himself he knows not where.'

Lincoln's Reply Typical

"Immediately, back home, Lincoln's law partner, Billy Herndon, became terribly concerned over Lincoln's political future. He sent Lincoln a worried letter. In a typical reply, Lincoln asked his partner: 'Would you have voted what you felt and knew to be a lie?' But still his fair-weather friends ran to cover like scared rabbits, turning 'appeasers,' and fawning upon Abe Lincoln's falsifying foes.

"So, Lincoln, being above all things a realist, considered that a candidacy for a second term in Congress was not worth the candle. Knowing that he was right, Lincoln could afford to wait! Weaker men might have been discouraged. But not the patient Lincoln. He would wait. His hour would come. It did. Thirteen years after his blistering attack upon President Polk, he himself was President Lincoln.

"But, no sooner had Lincoln come to the White House, than Polk's party precipitated the bloody Civil War. But, still patient, still brave, still fortified by a sustaining sense of his own rightness under God, still unwilling to evade the respon-

sibility of any such crisis, Lincoln accepted the challenge of the rule-or-ruin divisionist Democrats, and beat the secessionists to their knees."

Mr. Gross pointed out that "after the South's 'little Pearl Harbor' attack upon the Norfolk Navy Yard (April 20, 1861), Lincoln quickly ousted his Secretary of the Navy and turned the job over to Gideon Welles, who, with a highly capable assistant, justify historians in stating that the Navy was thereafter much more efficiently directed, and without costly mistakes in higher command, 'since the country did not force it to make rear admirals out of politicians.'"

No "Globalist" Chatter

As to Lincoln's "war-time attitude toward sensational or revolutionary post-war hypotheses," Mr. Gross declared: "He did not try to stretch the war to cover a lot of fantastic notions about the specifications of a vaguely-projected Utopia. In his first message to Congress, he said: 'I have been anxious and careful that the conflict . . . shall not degenerate into a violent and remorseless revolutionary struggle.' Contrast that, if you will, with some of today's globalist chatter about 'world revolution,' 'this is America's century,' etc."

"In the Summer of 1862," the speaker continued, "Lincoln repulsed the various 'win the peace' wolves that sulked in various types of sheep's clothing.

"James Russell Lowell, in June of that year, brought out a 'Bigelow Paper' which was tantamount to an assertion that we might 'win the war, but lose the peace.' Lowell contended that the chief issue was not saving the Union, but rather, the abolition of slavery.

"In his famous letter to Horace Greeley (August 22, 1862), Lincoln answered this argument of an eminent New England 'intellectual.' Said Lincoln: 'If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and letting' others alone, I would do that.' We might all wish that the party in power today, in the midst of another and even mightier war, could see its way clear to deliver a convincing paraphrase of Lincoln's firm purpose to keep first things first!"

Turning to the end of the war and the reconstruction era, Mr. Gross said: "The conquered Southerners, after 1865, asked only food

and land. What they got, however, was something like a quart of milk and some feverish agitation for premature reforms at the hands of those who had proclaimed themselves the 'saviors' of the South.

Reconstruction Retarded

"The process of orderly reconstruction which the benign Lincoln had hoped to advance was criminally retarded by a bigoted 'win the peace' element which ruthlessly pressed its arrogant theories beyond all reason. Booth's bullet, calculated to help the South, actually initiated the shameful orgy of oppression and corruption which Claude Bowers was to make famous as 'The Tragic

Era'—the most tragic in American history.

"But Booth's bullet could not have produced all this calamity without the misdirected fake-idealism of Eastern Republicans, who, never in sympathy with Lincoln and his Midwestern point of view, succeeded only in sabotaging national unity and engendering a long-persistent bitterness.

"These divisionists' political heirs and successors are at it again. Real, honest-to-God Republicans should resist them with everything at their command. If Congress should once more yield to this Eastern Seaboard coalition of Big Business imperialism and Left Wing 'social reformism,' it would be opening the way toward another chaotic reconstruction period—another Tragic Era such as that which involved the attempted impeachment of Lincoln's successor, Andrew Johnson, a maverick ex-Democrat, not without ability, but unable to cope with the powerful forces which pseudo-intellectual bigotry so readily lets loose.

"Already this Eastern Seaboard element has its new crew of carpet-baggers abroad in the land, desecrating the memory of Lincoln by false pretensions to worthiness of leadership in Lincoln's party. . . .

Today's "Boys In Blue"

"Lincoln, when he delivered his immortal Gettysburg Address, was a little less than a year and a half from victory for the Union cause—and also from his own death. It may be that today we are either nearer or farther from a similar triumph for our Republic's cause in the present conflict. It is almost certain that virtually all of us will experience, during the next year and a half, much painful sorrow and suffering. It may well be, indeed, that some of us today are close to more or less personal peril incurred from our loyalty to the Republic and its highest ideals. . . .

"May we remember that while our boys in the battle-lines are drawing upon every resource of courage, just as did Lincoln's Boys in Blue, we have the moral obligation to mobilize all the resources of our civilian courage on the home front.

"Abraham Lincoln's endurance may well serve us as a model in these times, which are not wholly unlike those in which Lincoln lived. Let us take that model and again resolve 'that these honored dead shall not have died in vain.' Our individual lives are as nothing by comparison with our cause—that same cause to which Lincoln, long years ago, so conscientiously dedicated the Republican Party.

"May today's leaders of that party, spurning the heresies which Lincoln spurned, standing unflinchingly in defense of the ideals which Lincoln served so faithfully, hear once more, down the ages, his heartening voice emerging from a council of war at a time when the cause of the Union seemed to have ebbed to its lowest level:

"'Courage, gentlemen, it is almost daybreak!'"

Mr. Gross was introduced by Walter Helmke, Allen County Republican chairman. Otto H. Adams was chairman. Robert Richey is president of the organization.

All the battles of the Mexican War had been fought before I took my seat in Congress, but the American army was still in Mexico, and the treaty of peace was not fully and formally ratified until the June afterward. Much has been said of my course in Congress in regard to this war. As careful examination of the "Journal" and "Congressional Globe" shows that I voted for all the supply measures that came up, and for all the measures in any way favorable to the officers, soldiers, and their families, who conducted the war through: with the exception that some of these measures passed without yeas and nays, leaving no record as to how particular men voted.

The "Journal" and "Globe" also show me voting that the war was unnecessarily and unconstitutionally begun by the President of the United States. This is the language of Mr. Ashum's amendment, for which ⁹ ~~up~~ and nearly or quite all other Whigs of the House of Representatives voted.

(Warner's notes)

ANOTHER PEACE EFFORT.—The Washington correspondent of the Baltimore Sun is a thorough Loco-foco and is well acquainted with the projects of the Administration. In the last number of that paper there is a letter in which the writer states that it was well known in Washington that, on Saturday, the 17th inst., a messenger of peace was despatched by our Government to Mexico. The writer, after observing that some persons had stated that the terms were more favorable than those recently rejected by Mexico, goes on to say:

However that may be, I can state, with the most entire confidence, that the President has solemnly determined never to relinquish to Mexico one inch of that soil which has been profusely watered by American blood and consecrated by American valor. The bloody battle fields of Monterey and Buena Vista are never again to know Mexican domination. So we go down to twenty-six degrees thirty minutes, any how. That offer may be, I trust, acceptable to Mexico. It is the best she will ever get.

If she makes another stand against old Taylor at San Luis Potosi she will render it necessary that we should come down a little further south—to the twenty-second parallel of latitude.

It was the notion of Mr. Benton, three weeks ago, that we should take twenty-five—taking in Saltillo, Parras, &c. His notions are pretty much the same with those of the Administration. Mexico has now her last offer of any terms that will recognize and preserve Mexican nationality. A continuance of the war will give us so strong a hold on Mexico that it can never be relinquished.

